

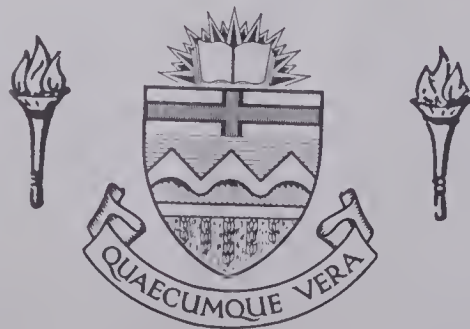
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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
FRANCO-DUTCH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS,
1598-1609

BY



JOHANNES A. SPEE

A THESIS
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The undersigned certify that they have read, and
recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance,
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1598-1609 submitted by Johannes A. Spee in partial fulfil-
ment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

ABSTRACT

The subject of this thesis is the intriguing diplomatic relationship between France and the Dutch Republic from the late 1590's until the signing of a twelve years' truce in the Spanish-Dutch war in April of 1609. Within the limitations of available resources an attempt has been made to show how Henry IV's ambitions in respect to the United Provinces were frustrated by clever Dutch manipulation of Spanish war fatigue and Anglo-French rivalry in the Netherlands.

The first chapter deals with Henry's attempt to withdraw gracefully from the anti-Spanish coalition of 1596. Although the peace of Vervins, 1598, gave France a much needed breathing space, Henry's lack of prestige abroad became apparent when his English and Dutch allies refused to lay down arms.

Chapter Two covers Henry's continued aid to the Dutch. The King tried to prevent a possible growth of English influence in the Republic while simultaneously favoring the Spanish entanglement in the Dutch war.

Chapter Three shows how the Republic successfully employed Habsburg fears of a renewed Franco-Dutch alliance and French ambitions to establish a protectorate over the United Provinces. Although Dutch financial difficulties were matched by a similar situation on the Spanish side, the announcement that preliminary negotiations between

that preliminary negotiations between Spain and the Dutch had taken place surprised Europe.

Chapter Four outlines the mission of Pierre Jeannin to the Hague. This French ambassador disengaged his King from a complex diplomatic involvement and presented him with the political glory intrinsic to success in the role of peace maker.

French mediation helped the Dutch to attain peace and international recognition of their independence. This recognition, supported by a relatively strong military position, enabled the Republic to exhibit great leadership during the explosive days of the Cleves-Julich crisis as will be seen briefly in the conclusion.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- Correspondance Correspondance de la Cour d'Espagne sur les affaires des Pays-Bas au XVII^e siècle par Henry Lonchay et Joseph Cuvelier, Tome Premier, Précis de la Correspondance de Philippe III (1598-1621), (Brussels: Librairie Kiessling et C^{le}, 1923).
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INTRODUCTION

A PARTNERSHIP OF NEED

The vast ambitions of Philip II of Spain were frustrated on many levels by the failure of the Great Armada of 1588. Recognizing the interdependence of his enemies, Philip had hoped that a successful invasion of England would weaken both the protestant movement and the coalition opposing Spain's political domination of Europe. Without England the heretical movement on the Continent would face the forces of the counter-reformation alone. Without England the Dutch rebels would bear the full thrust of Spanish military power, and France, still far from being stabilized internally, might fall to the Spanish influenced Catholic league of the Guise party. The failure of the Armada meant not only a profitless dissipation of Spanish resources but also an affirmation of the utility of co-operation among Spain's enemies. During the quarter century after the defeat of the Armada the struggle between the Dutch Republic and the Spanish crown was crucial to the development of Europe. One aspect of this pivotal role of the Netherlands is elucidated by a study of Franco-Dutch relations in this period.

The French civil war of the late 1580's had increased co-operation between the Huguenots and the Dutch. The former were aware that a national war upon Spain would

save them from a religious war at home,¹ while the Dutch realized that an alliance with Henry of Navarre, the leader of the Huguenots, would benefit the Protestant movement as well as further their own ideals of independence. On 5 May 1588 Henry's delegate, Michel Hurault de l'Hospital, invited the Dutch to join in an alliance against the Catholic league of the Guises.² A train of delegations followed: Clermont d'Amboise on 31 August 1588, Jacques Bongars on 23 March 1589, Coignet la Thuillerie on 12 August of that year and De Saldaigne on 23 September. The frequency of Henry's diplomatic missions was indicative of both his desperate situation and the insufficient amounts of aid earmarked by the Dutch.

On 1 August 1589 Henry III was assassinated and the King of Navarre claimed the French throne as Henry IV. Dutch aid began to flow rather freely as the prospects of a protestant king opened a host of speculations in the United Provinces. Spain also reacted sharply to the transfer of the French crown, increasing her aid to French ultracatholics and committing Parma's forces in the Spanish Netherlands to intervention in France. The short years of Parma's diversion to France were utilized by the Dutch to train an efficient army. No longer were they satisfied with the mutinying of Leicester's days; strict military discipline, regular pay,

¹A.F. Pollard, From the Accession of Edward VI to the Death of Elizabeth (1547-1603), Vol. VI of the History of England, William Hunt, Reginald L. Poole, eds., (12 vols.; London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1919), p.330.

²Japikse, VI, pp. 52-53.

field drills and the support of artillery were initiated and were instrumental in a Dutch conquest of scores of towns on the eastern and southern borders of the Republic.³ The military reconstruction was such a success that a few years later Maurice could leave his traditional defensive position and embark on an offensive war.

Paul Choart, Seigneur de Buzanval, had been appointed as Henry's ambassador in the Republic, and he succeeded in obtaining an ever increasing amount of Dutch aid for France. In January 1591 the French ambassador requested one hundred thousand florins and some naval vessels.⁴ Twenty regiments of Dutch troops followed a little later⁵ and although the men were called back in 1593, an extra grant of money enabled the French King to hire an equivalent force at home.⁶

On 17 January 1595 Henry officially declared war upon Spain. The nature of Henry's relationship with the Dutch changed slightly, and the humble requests for aid became royal disapprovals of Dutch military efforts.⁷ When the King's performance in the field was inglorious and a Spanish army

³P.J. Blok, Geschiedenis van het Nederlandsche Volk (8 vols.; Groningen: J.B. Wolters, 1896), III, pp. 425-427.

⁴Japikse, VII, p. 346.

⁵Ibid., p. 352.

⁶Ibid., VIII, p. 34.

⁷Ibid., p. 418.

under Fuentes invaded Picardy, the self-appointed leader of the anti-Spanish coalition became humble again. Marshall Fouquerolles came to the Hague and requested five Dutch regiments on 17 August 1595. A few weeks later Buzanval wanted another 3,000 infantry.⁸ In consultation with Maurice of Nassau the States-General promised twenty-four regiments.⁹ In spite of all this aid Henry's military position did not improve, and in November of that year Coignet la Thuillerie returned to the Hague to thank the Dutch for their assistance. He informed the States-General, however, that without greater assistance the French King would be forced to sign a peace with Spain.¹⁰

The spring of 1596 saw a Spanish conquest of Calais. Although Dutch troops again were sent to France, the States-General refused Henry's request to borrow Maurice of Nassau.¹¹ Negotiations towards a formal Anglo-French-Dutch military alliance were initiated and Henry's dependence on the Dutch was great enough to make the French King go through lengthy efforts to satisfy Dutch demands for equality of partnership in the alliance.¹² Elizabeth's preoccupation with protocol

⁸Ibid., p. 427.

⁹Ibid., p. 429.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 439.

¹¹Ibid., IX, p. 70.

¹²Ibid., p. 108.

was painful, but her need for naval support and her hopes to see a repayment of English loans to the Republic ultimately made her willing to negotiate. She requested the sending of a Dutch delegate to the cautionary towns to complete the terms of the alliance.¹³ The response of the States-General, however, indicated a new spirit in the United Republic which would reveal itself even more clearly during the next decade. Those who wished to negotiate could come to the Hague.¹⁴ And indeed discussions were held in the Hague. On 20 September Gilpin, the English ambassador, read a letter from Her Majesty to the States-General. Dutch participation in the alliance should be permitted, not because it was essential but because it was an honor. After all, the terms of the English-French agreement provided for broader participation.¹⁵

Two treaties were signed. The first, the Triple Alliance, specified that the signatory powers committed themselves not to sign an individual peace with Spain while the second was a purely Franco-Dutch agreement. Although Elizabeth, in a secret understanding with Henry, shirked her contributions to the Triple Alliance, the fact remained that the Republic had become a power of international importance. This would be emphasized again during the negotiations that preceded the treaty of Vervins.

¹³Ibid., p. 114.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 115.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 117.

CHAPTER I

THE ROAD TO VERVINS

Henry IV's official declaration of war upon Spain on 17 January 1595 was intended to give an offensive character to the existing struggle between the two countries. The King's position in France had been consolidated considerably since his coronation by the submission of many towns and nobles to the new dynasty. An open war against the enemy, who supported pockets of resistance with troops and money, seemed not only warranted but might also result in reducing internal strife, and for awhile Henry's calculations appeared to be correct. Royal authority was established in Mayenne's home territories, and the King became reconciled with most of the Ligue leaders. Against Spanish armies, however, royal troops proved to be inferior. The enemy increasingly threatened the King through guerilla units which operated from the occupied cities of St. Nazaire and Brest. Pro-Spanish insurrections took place in Languedoc, Provence, and Guienne which endangered the cities of Narbonne, Marseille, and Bayonne.¹ When a strong Spanish army was concentrated on France's northern frontier and Calais was conquered on 23 April 1596, the north country was left wide open for a Spanish attack on Amiens.

¹Lettres Missives, IV, pp. 615-616 (Henry to De La Fontaine, 4 July 1596).

Henry's inglorious military performance had a sobering effect upon his Dutch allies. During his succession struggle foreign assistance had flowed rather freely from the north as the King's protestant background and his promise to continue the war had raised hopes of committing the whole French military potential to the Dutch cause. Henry's military weakness was followed by a corresponding lower level of English interest in the rebellious Netherlands. No longer were there any Anjous or Leicesters who would throw in their lot and national prestige to develop Dutch nationhood, and the Republic was forced to bear the full increasing burden of its own war as well as to support the military efforts of its allies.

The news of Henry's conversion had been accepted in the Hague with regret,² but as an unavoidable fact. The Dutch were realistic enough not to let this interfere with any possibility of foreign aid they could obtain. In the hope of deriving such assistance they had signed a triple alliance with England and France in 1596. However, it became very clear to them that the limited international recognition of their independence, as implied by the treaty, was a financial liability in respect to the war. The Dutch continued to aid Henry, and they sent their naval squadrons in support of British operations but the lion's share of

²"infiniment et du fond de leurs coeurs contristez..." Japikse, VIII, p. 38.

their war effort occurred on their own eastern frontiers where all Spanish influence disappeared.

Gradually Henry became conscious of the fact that his country was being utilized by his allies, who "by the war preserved and supported themselves, while his Kingdom was the war theatre where the tragedies occurred, was ruined".³ He complained about the insufficient aid he received, particularly from England,⁴ and his growing anxiety about the course of events is illustrated by his requests for money.⁵

The worsening military situation resulted in more widely spread internal disorder. Tax collections had become irregular and in some areas completely impossible. The west country had become une foret de voleurs where monks, Huguenots and peasants were murdered almost at random.⁶ Corruption had permeated all ranks of governmental bureaucracy and a great many members of the aristocracy were engaged actively in brigandage. Traditional expedients such as fines and the

³"par la guerre se conservoient et maintenoient, cependant que son royaume estoit le théâtre où les tragedies se jouoient, se ruinoit". Palma Cayet, p. 8.

⁴Lettres Missives, IV, p. 751 (Henry to the Duke de Piney Luxembourg, 25 April 1597).

⁵Ibid., pp. 710, 715, 719, 732, 737, 739 (Henry to the Constable, March and April 1597).

⁶The internal disorder of France at this time is described at length in Jean H. Mariéjol, La Réforme et la Ligue - L'Edit de Nantes, and Henri IV et Louis XIII, parts I and II of vol. VI of Histoire de France, Ernest Lavisse, ed., (9vols,; Paris: Librairie Hachette et C^{ie}, 1900-1910) Part I, pp. 403-412, Part II, pp. 1-22.

sale of offices brought only temporary financial relief to the crown, and such expedients always evoked wide-spread criticism and opposition.

Henry had to rally the troubled country around his government before he could undertake any forceful move on the international scene. Recollections of the unwieldy sessions of the Estates-General prior to his coronation, were still too vivid to make attractive any idea of their reconvention. Instead, Henry decided to present the problems to a meeting of Notables, in the hope of obtaining some succor in the country's plight. Since the King undoubtedly would face many demands for reform, his resolve to call upon the assembly "was evidence of the extreme need to which he was reduced".⁷ In an attempt to prevent a sharp confrontation, as well as to subdue growing criticism everywhere, the King promised to call a meeting of the Estates-General a little later.⁸ The announcement was indicative of Henry's tactics; it emphasized the honor the King bestowed on the Notables by calling upon them first, while reminding the delegates of the King's independent position. Any successes of the meeting of the Notables would alleviate some of the "calamities and

⁷"temoignai de l'extrême nécessité où il était réduit". Ibid., VI, Part I, p. 407.

⁸Lettres Missives, IV, p. 621 (Henry to Langlois, 25 July 1596).

miseries my people endure",⁹ and might have a moderating influence upon a session of the Estates General if the King were forced to convene one. Although Henry's meeting with the Notables was unproductive of substantial help, it indicated the King's continuing efforts to ease internal dissension while trying to grapple with a difficult situation abroad.

On the international scene Henry became inclined to seek a peace with Spain. In justification of this policy, the royal historiographer Palma Cayet later wrote that "the German Princes, the Swiss, the republics and rulers of Italy, who had assisted His Majesty with troops, money, advice and prayers, all assured the King of their desire for peace and for a conclusion of such distasteful and cruel wars".¹⁰ However, even if some of Henry's lesser allies might have agreed with him, his major allies, the Dutch and the English, were hostile to any such accomodation. Henry was dependent upon the latter's subsidies and, thus, at a disadvantage vis à vis Spain. Even opening negotiations posed enormous problems.

Fortunately for Henry, Spain declared bankruptcy in 1596, while a combined Anglo-Dutch attack on Cadiz caused another estimated 20,000,000 ducats damage.¹¹ When the Spanish

⁹"calamitez et misères qui mon peuples endure" Ibid., p. 878, (Henry to the Queen of England, 15 November 1597).

¹⁰"les Princes Allemands, les Suisses et les republicues et potentats d'Italie, qui avoient secouru sa Majeste, qui de troupes, qui d'argent, qui d'advis, qui par prières envers Dieu, l'assurent tous qu'ils luy souhaitoient la paix, et la fin de si estranges et cruelles guerres". Palma Cayet, p. 8.

¹¹Mariéjol, VI, Part I, p. 413.

expedition to Ireland failed because of bad weather, the aging Philip II revealed his inclinations for peace to the papal diplomat Father Calatagirone, superior-general of the Franciscans.

The Dutch did not have enough confidence in Henry IV and his promises to make them overlook the possibility of a French withdrawal from the war. Even before the triple alliance had been signed, the government of the Spanish Netherlands had initiated peace feelers to Henry. The King had passed on this information to the Dutch and hoped, by creating greater anxiety between the States-General and Queen Elizabeth, to increase the amount of aid to France.¹² The Hague had sent Lieven Calvart to the court of the French King to keep the government of the Republic informed about any further developments, while skilful English and French negotiators neither disguised their dependence on each other nor confused their calculations of what each should contribute to the other.

On 13 January 1597 the French ambassador in the Hague, Paul Choart, seigneur de Buzanval, informed the States-General of Henry's suggestion that an allied strategy conference should be convened at Dieppe. Besides the topic of a new military campaign, the discussions would include a possible peace with Spain. The Dutch interpreted the reference to

¹²Japikse, IX, p.82. See also Van Deventer, II, pp. 128-135 (Calvart to the States-General, 2 September 1596).

possible negotiations with the enemy as a diplomatically worded royal disapproval of their war contributions, for Dutch military obligations under the agreement of 31 October 1596, never had been carried out. Their response was swift: a resounding cavalry victory over the Spaniards at Turnhout on 24 January 1597.

Henry attempted to mask his intentions. On 3 February he invited the States-General to send a Dutch delegate to accompany his representative to various German princes with the purpose of extending the anti-Spanish alliance.¹³ Two days later, Henry complained by letter to the Earl of Essex about the behavior of Mildmay, the English ambassador to France. The King expressed his dismay over the fact that Mildmay publicly spread rumors of existing Spanish peace overtures and rejected any implication of being involved in the matter.¹⁴

A similar royal denial took place in Rouen on 20 February during an audience of Lieven Calvart with the King. Henry promised the Dutch agent to call a halt to the journeying between Paris and Brussels by some obscure Frenchmen.¹⁵

¹³Lettres Missives, IV, p. 683 (Henry to the States-General, 3 February 1597).

¹⁴"qu'il n'a aucune creance ny fiance en moy" Ibid., p. 687 (Henry to Essex, 5 February 1597).

¹⁵Van Deventer, II, p. 141. Although the name of a certain Mr. Vulnuve is mentioned, his relationship, if any, with the government is not clarified.

The travels had given rise to all kinds of speculation. Again the King assured Calvart of his intentions "never to give attention to anything that would violate his honor or his obligations and promises to the States-General".¹⁶ Reassured but still concerned the Dutch promised to live up to the treaty obligations, and the alliance appeared solid again. It would be put to the test severely when the Spaniards conquered Amiens in March 1597, but for the moment disagreement seemed limited to petty issues. Henry admonished the provincial States of Holland and Zealand to co-operate and live in peace during this period of national need¹⁷ while the Dutch urged Henry to return a church to the protestant community of Metz.

Not only the fall of Amiens but also Henry's health complicated Franco-Dutch relations in the spring of 1597. The heavy burden of government in a time of chaos and war began to take its toll. On 5 April Henry wrote that "in all truth my health is failing and I feel very indisposed".¹⁸ He fell ill on 14 April and during the subsequent period of rest he had energy only for the pressing financial woes of

¹⁶"dat hy nimmermeer tegen syne eer en belofte en obligacien die hy tot U.E.M. hadde, iets soudén attenteren". Ibid., p. 145 (Calvart to the States-General, 20 February 1597).

¹⁷"de vivre doucement, s' accomodans au temps et nécessité de l'Estat" Japikse, IX, p. 409.

¹⁸"en verité ma santé en a besoin, me trouvant fort incommodé" Lettres Missives, IV, p. 732 (Henry to the Constable, 5 April 1597).

his government.

Henry's illness threw the burden of the war upon his allies, and on 13 June the King expressed his gratitude to the Dutch for bringing an army into the field.¹⁹ But his serious illness was disquieting to the Dutch, since only the King's life prevented a renewal of the debilitating civil wars, and they were reluctant to undertake further commitments. Buzanval experienced enough apprehension of the situation, which again threatened a possible peace with Spain.²⁰ He returned to the States-General on July 10 and read a letter from Henry IV. Since English aid was not forthcoming, the King requested the Dutch to send 3,000 or 4,000 troops to Amiens or to attack the Spanish forces in the Southern Netherlands. Moreover, they were expected to assist the King against the rebellious Duke of Mercoeur who continued to oppose royal authority.²¹ Apparently the King and his ambassador, by taking a strong line, hoped to overcome Dutch fears that Henry was losing his grasp or even dying.

The events of the following days confirmed the correctness of Buzanval's evaluation. A Dutch army moved out on 15 July. The immediacy of the decision and the lack of definite instructions to the commanders was uncharacteristic

¹⁹Japikse, IX, p. 413.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 414-415.

²¹Ibid., pp. 416-418.

of the Dutch and indicated the serious atmosphere in the Hague. Hoping Henry's reassurances could be trusted, the Dutch supported 4,000 troops in the King's service around Amiens and shipped war supplies to royal positions in Brittany.²²

Dutch altruism towards Henry did not take precedence over matters of national security closer to home. Some day the French might leave the alliance, and with the Spanish army now busily engaged in northern France, Maurice of Nassau decided that the proper moment had arrived to clear the eastern frontier of all enemy positions. He easily captured Rijnberk, Meurs, Alphen and Lingem, and the rapidity of his military successes forced the Spanish commanders to divert some troops from France to the north.

The difficult summer of 1597 ended in success. Henry's health improved, and on 25 September Amiens fell to the royal besiegers. Henry did not deny the valuable assistance he had received from the Dutch, but on the other hand the fact that his protestant allies had taken care of their own interests had not escaped him. He felt justified to ask for compensations and instructed Buzanval to press for greater aid. Henry emphasized the "benefits they derive from the war I fight here" and offered some bait to the Dutch. He promised "to enter Artois and Hainaut if my army were

²²Ibid., p. 599.

strong and if I had the means of keeping it together".²³

The response was rather cold. The Dutch, for a long time well aware of Henry's precarious position, had received evidence casting doubt upon the King's dependability. On 26 July Antoine de Sailly, successor of the meanwhile deceased Lieven Calvart, had reported from Amiens: "I have advised you in a letter of the 12th of this month, which I hope you have received, that the general of the Cordelier Order has arrived here. He is engaged in finding some form of agreement between the kings of France and Spain by order of the Pope".²⁴ Thus, since double dealings by Henry were not impossible, the Dutch adopted a wait-and-see attitude.

The situation became daily more desperate for Henry. He realized that any peace rumor would "preclude and slow down" allied aid at a moment when his soldiers "would not

²³"les avantages qu'ils tirent de la guerre que je fais par decà...d'entrer en Artois et Hainaut ce pendant que mon armée est forte et que j'ay moyen de la tenir ensemble" Lettres Missives, IV, p. 839 (Henry to Buzanval, 1 September 1597).

²⁴"Je vous ay advisé par une lettre de XII^e du present que j'espère vous aurez receue, qu'il estoit icy arrivé le général de l'ordre des Cordeliers qui s'entremensloit pour trouver une forme d'accord entre les roys de France et d'Espagne par le commandement du Pape" Quoted in Haak, I, p. 356. (Henry to Sully, 13 July 1597). Although Maximilien de Bethune, sieur de Rosny, did not become Duc de Sully until March 1606, throughout this thesis he will be referred to as Sully.

move without money".²⁵ The strains of Henry's recent illness, the bitter debate in France on the legality of regicide and his constant shortage of funds all moved the King to the conference table. And by mid-1597, Spain also was inclined to peace.

Philip II's aspirations to a restoration of the Spanish and Catholic hegemony were as far from realization as ever. He had seen his country go bankrupt, the Irish expedition had failed, Amiens had been retaken and in the Netherlands the achievement of Parma had been undone completely. Moreover, Dutch and English merchants were breaking into the Levant²⁶ and the Far East,²⁷ while raids on Spanish shipping made the war increasingly profitable to them. Although it is unlikely that Philip understood the developing pattern of territorial states, in which each state began to feel free to develop its own potentialities without conforming to any externally imposed system of beliefs, he realized that the shifting balance of power had made a complete Spanish

²⁵"n'ont de l'argent, ils ne s'asujettiront jamais aux tranchées" Lettres Missives, IV, p.810 (Henry to Sully, 13 July 1597).

²⁶P. J. Blok, III. p. 453.

²⁷Charles R. Boxer, The Dutch Seaborne Empire 1600-1800 (London: Hutchinsinon & Co. Publishers Ltd., 1965), p. 22.

victory impossible.

His old age, his young son, whom he wanted to see married and to whom he would like to bequeath his lands at peace, his older daughter to whom, upon her marriage to Cardinal Albert, he would like to give the Netherlands and who together, as the new rulers, would need the friendship and good neighbourship of a French king.²⁸

All pointed towards a willingness for an early settlement, and the pending marriage of the Infanta provided the opportunity to work for imperial involvement in the Spanish difficulties. Mendoza was sent to Vienna to request the Emperor to cede the diocese of Besançon to his Spanish relatives. The transfer of the Netherlands to the new rulers thus would leave Spain with "a foot in the Duchy of Burgundy".²⁹ Mendoza's second suggestion was an imperial declaration of animosity against all who obstructed a peace between the Netherlands and Spain; foreign support of the Dutch would become an act of complicity and an official hindrance of peace. Rudolph refused both demands. He would only agree to send some representatives to the Hague to enter into talks with the Dutch. His delegates were unsuccessful. They were stopped at the border and passports were refused to them.

²⁸"son veil age, son fils jeune qu'ils vouloit marier, et luy laisser ses états paisibles, sa fille aînée à laquelle il vouloit donner les Pays-Bas en la maritant au cardinal Albert, qui somme nouveaux seigneurs auroient besoin de l'amitié et bon voisinance d'un roy de France" Palma Cayet, p. 7.

²⁹"un pied en la Duche de Bourgogne" Ibid., p. 9.

Carel Nutzel, the leader of the Imperial mission, was informed that "he should not wait for the requested passports if he had suggestions' pertaining to peace negotiations with the King of Spain; that he could remain where he was or go home, whichever he wanted; but if he had any other suggestions he could do so in writing".³⁰ Although hearings were granted to Polish and Danish missions all plans for peace met a similar immovable attitude. Dzialli, the leader of the Polish delegation, urged the Dutch to come to terms with Spain so that the whole Habsburg military might could be employed against the Turks. The Danish government offered mediation and emphasized non-intervention in neutral shipping. The answer to both was brief and simple: it was not in the interest of the Republic to negotiate with the enemy,³¹ and during the remainder of the summer of 1597 the States-General continued their silence. They did not want to provide Henry with any excuse to enter negotiations with Spain.

³⁰"bysoverre hy in last heeft eenige saken te proponeren, de vredehandelinghe aengaende metten Coninck van Spaignen, dat hy opte versochte pasporte niet en heeft te verwachten, maer te blyven ter plaitzen, daer hy is, oft te vertricken naer zyn gelieven: maer indin hy eenige andere saken soude hebben te proponeren, dat hy de punten daervan scriftelyck will oversenden" Japikse, IX, p. 453 (15 July 1597).

³¹Ibid., pp. 459-462.

Philip II foresaw the looming complications of the Cleves-Julich succession. The area was of great importance to the Spanish supply system, especially since the Atlantic was controlled by hostile navies. In Vienna, Mendoza suggested the Emperor appoint a special imperial governor and council for the territories in question since the duke was "deprived of his sense, without any children, and without hope of having any".³² Rudolph refused once more. He could ill afford such interference in the internal affairs of a prince when a serious Turkish attack endangered the Empire. Then the Spanish diplomat attempted to put religious pressure upon the Emperor and requested the appointment of a catholic magistrate for the city of Cologne. Much to Mendoza's dismay, Rudolph appealed to the bishop of Liège to see to it that a suitable replacement for the protestant judge was found. Thus, while avoiding direct intervention, Rudolph escaped any accusation of favoring the Protestant cause.

Meanwhile, peace preliminaries continued. In July, Henry met with the general of the Cordeliers and pretended to have some real choice in the matter. He informed Calatagirone of his commitment to his allies without whose consent he could not conclude the war.³³ But bringing

³²"débilité de ses senses, sans enfants, et sans esperance d'en avoir" Palma Cayet, p. 10.

³³Lettres Missives, IV, p.826 (Henry to the Duke de Piney Luxembourg, 11 August 1597).

about a change of attitude in his Dutch and English allies was not Henry's greatest worry. There were many more reasons why Henry needed the strongest image possible at the conference table. Not only did he have to hide a very precarious military position and complete dependence on his allies but he was also unsure of his position vis à vis ever important Rome. Henry's conversion had not been accepted formally by the pope, and his relationship with Gabrielle d'Estrées had dented the image of the Most Christian King; the elevation to the cardinalate of the ardent Ligueur De Givry had disturbed the King greatly because of implications of continuing papal opposition. Henry needed Rome's approval of the annulment of his marriage to Margaret of Valois, and friendly papal influence could help him to obtain an acceptable peace with Spain. Although he had stated his recognition of the pope as "our true, spiritual Father",³⁴ he was weary of the ultramontane views in this matter. Diplomatic stubbornness to obtain more acceptable bases for later negotiations might well backfire in a spreading acceptance of the theory of tyrannicide. Again, Henry was forced to walk a political tightrope.

Father Calatagirone mentioned Philip's willingness to return all military conquests, with the exception of

³⁴"nostre vray Père Spirituel": Ibid., p. 602 (Henry to the Pope, 20 June 1596).

Calais, to the French monarchy. In return for such benevolence Henry was to rid the country of all forms of heresy. Acceptance of this proposal would be tantamount to an immediate outbreak of civil war, while a public rejection of the religious clause undoubtedly would have adverse effects among catholic fanatics and might complicate relations with Rome further. The city of Calais was not a real issue. Henry had offered the port to Elizabeth before, in return for greater English aid.³⁵ The King gambled and made the Franciscan return to Brussels with instructions that all conquests, including Calais, had to be returned. He avoided a direct reference to the heresy condition by stating that he would never tolerate any outside interference with the government of his kingdom.³⁶ When the Spaniards agreed to return Calais to French rule with all territories as well as to drop the religious clause³⁷ Henry must have been astonished as well as gratified. His position was strengthened further a month later by the victory at Amiens. Thereafter, his activities were concentrated on convincing his allies of the desirability of peace.

Before any details of the Franco-Spanish peace were

³⁵Mariéjol, VI, Part I, p. 410.

³⁶Haak, I, p. 357 (Sailly to Oldenbarnevelt, 26 July 1597).

³⁷Ibid.

worked out, Henry turned towards his allies. On 6 November 1597, Buzanval presented a royal letter to the States-General in the Hague. Although the letter still dealt with the topic of the common war, its tone was remarkably different. The King argued that France needed peace and that his most intimate advisors advocated it. He inquired on what conditions the Dutch would discharge him of the promise not to seek a separate peace. The letter closed with a request for greater aid if the war was to be continued.³⁸ A few days later, Buzanval repeated this request for aid. He asked for some Dutch naval vessels to be used in the Loire estuary to bring Mercoeur into submission. ³⁹

The Dutch understood quickly that Henry was wavering and sought to prevent him from making peace. They discussed the advisability of sending a combined Anglo-Dutch delegation to France. They decided against this but promised an amount of aid that would satisfy the French King. Through Buzanval they urged Henry to "abandon all plans for peace or armistice with the enemy".⁴⁰ They claimed that the Spanish forces were on the verge of being ruined because of victories in Holland and at Amiens. The Dutch pointed out that a Spanish victory over the Republic would enable the foe to draw 100,000 fighting men from the Low Countries to attack France. In a

³⁸Japikse, IX, p. 426.

³⁹Ibid., p. 427.

⁴⁰"diverteren van den tractate van peys oft trefves": Ibid., p. 426.

last effort, they appointed their chief executive officer, Grand Pensionary Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, to go to France. His assignment was to prevent a peace between Henry and Spain and to obtain from the King "specific declarations and assurances not to be persuaded" to enter into a settlement.⁴¹ On the same day another delegation was appointed to discuss with the English government the implications of the possible French withdrawal from the war.

The French change in attitude had not gone unnoticed in England. On 9 December 1597, the Dutch agent in London, Caron, had informed the States-General of the surprise Queen Elizabeth expressed when she learned of Henry's war fatigue.⁴² According to the English, French financial difficulties were well matched by a similar situation in Spain. Although Henry's plans did not really threaten English interests, they certainly constituted another major nuisance for Elizabeth. Only with reluctance had she committed herself to a triple alliance with France and the Republic. A disengaged France might be able to sway the new European balance. Although English commercial interests began to show jealousy of Dutch mercantile successes, Elizabeth realized that as long as Philip II was forced to keep an army in the field

⁴¹"uytdruckelijcke verclaeringhe ende verseeckeringe nochtans, dat syne Ma^t. egeenssins hem daertoe en soude laeten leyden noch bewegen". Haak, I, p.408 (Report of Johan Van Oldenbarnevelt).

⁴²Van Deventer, II, p. 106 (Caron to the States-General, 10 December 1597).

against Henry, Spanish support for the Irish rebellion would be kept to a minimum. English reaction to Henry's plans was uncertain, and official policy was aimed at delaying settlement between France and Spain. London realized that there was always the possibility that Henry's murmurs were "a song, only to allure the Queen's Majesty to yield him still more aid of men and money, or both".⁴³ The problem of an English decision became more acute when Henry sent André Hurault de Maisse as his special ambassador to persuade Elizabeth to his views and, thus, to isolate Dutch opposition to peace.

On 30 November 1597, André de Maisse arrived in London. His instructions were identical to the position Henry had taken in his dealings with the Dutch: France needed peace and wanted English support for this idea or military assistance to continue the war. De Maisse was aware of the contradictory aspect of his duties and had confronted Henry with the question "to state clearly his intention as to exactly what he regarded more desirable: to attain peace or to continue the war".⁴⁴ Henry's answer was quite definite.

⁴³Conyers Read, Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), p. 537.

⁴⁴"de lui declarer ouvertement son intention et ce qu'il estimoit estre le plus pour le bien de son service, ou de procurer la paix ou de continuer la guerre" Report by de Maisse as quoted in M. Prevost-Paradol, Elisabeth et Henri IV, 1595-1598 (Paris: Michel Levy Freres, Librairies-Editeurs, 1863), p. 77.

He stated that he had opted for peace.⁴⁵

De Maisse became aware of the Essex-Cecil rivalry within the English government. The Essex faction counseled a continuation of the war while old William Cecil, Lord Burghley, favored peace. The latter would regard his career as completed by this achievement and would be able to retire. De Maisse also understood that the indecisiveness of English policy was aggravated by strong Anglo-Dutch rivalries, and he tried to utilize this competition between the two countries to the best of his ability.

The English government decided to convene an allied conference in London. The idea was dropped again when De Maisse declared himself compelled to return to France by 15 January 1598 and when the news reached London that a Dutch mission had been sent to France. English suspicions towards the Dutch increased, and daily meetings between De Maisse and the English government began to take place. On 10 January the French diplomat admitted that a preliminary agreement between France and Spain on the basis of the treaty of Cateau-Cambresis had been reached.⁴⁶ De Maisse had received information from Bellievre that suggested possible double dealings between Elizabeth and Philip II⁴⁷ and

⁴⁵"qu'il estoit resolu a la paix et qu'il la vouloit".
Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 276.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 225.

informed Caron of this "treason of the Queen".⁴⁸ English interests in Calais made De Maisse suggest to the Dutch ambassador that the Queen was willing to make "a surprise exchange of Flushing for Calais".⁴⁹ Although Caron was not deceived, the situation had become urgent enough for Elizabeth to announce her decision to send a delegate to France to take part in the Franco-Dutch deliberations of war and peace.

De Maisse had managed to move the crucial negotiations to France which would give Henry the advantage of diplomatic initiatives without time-consuming correspondence. The likelihood of strongly concerted Anglo-Dutch diplomatic pressure upon France had been decreased by the diplomat's efforts to arouse greater suspicion between the two. De Maisse's summary of the political climate revealed an understanding of the situation. He wrote his King:

Need leads Your Majesty to peace; fear and distrust drive the States to war; and to my knowledge the Queen does not desire either one; She likes to see her neighbours engaged so she can take care of her own welfare. I do not know what structure one could erect on three such different pillars.⁵⁰

⁴⁸"la trahison de la reine": Ibid., p. 270.

⁴⁹"l'échange par surprise de Flessingue contre Calais": Ibid., p. 271.

⁵⁰"La nécessité porte Votre Majesté à la Paix; la crainte et la défiance conduisent les Etats à la guerre; et la reine ne désire à bon escient ni l'un ni l'autre; mais elle veut voir ses voisins embrouillés et cependant faire ses affaires. Sur ces trois fondements si divers, je ne sais quel edifice on pourra bâtir". Ibid., p. 284.

Henry's intentions were to persuade his allies to take part in the official peace negotiations. In the early months of 1598, the Spanish delegates Richardot, Taxis, and Verreyken, had been joined by their French counterparts, Bellièvre, and Sillery, in Vervins. Alexander, Cardinal de Medici, Bishop of Florence and Father Calatagirone represented papal encouragements and interests. If the negotiations should lead to a common peace, Henry automatically would be absolved of any accusation of deserting his allies. England might have been persuaded to join the discussions, but the Dutch adamantly opposed any idea of peace. Lord Burghley saw the problem clearly. A status quo ante bellum would gain England the possibility of restoring law and order in Ireland without Spanish interference, but English interests in the Dutch Republic were likely to suffer since a peace on this basis "would involve the restoration of Church lands, the stripping of Dutch towns of their garrisons, and toleration for the Roman Catholics in the Netherlands".⁵¹ Moreover, financial advances to the Dutch and hopes of seeing them repaid, committed England to the Dutch cause.

The delegation that left the Hague for France officially was headed by Justinus van Nassau, although in reality it was controlled by Oldenbarnevelt. The latter's participation in the mission was important. It revealed

⁵¹Conyers Read, p. 540.

that, in spite of all indications to the contrary, the Dutch still held hopes of bringing about a change in Henry's plans. The promise of greater aid was rather irrelevant. If France were indeed to leave the alliance, the Dutch would be faced with the major burden of the war anyway. To stimulate Henry's military interests, Oldenbarnevelt had secured definite plans from the Dutch army command to invade the Spanish Netherlands. French and Dutch armies were to rendez-vous in Luxembourg and the expectation "of a general revolt ... to chase the Spaniards out"⁵² would make the campaign brief and successful.

During his journey through France, Oldenbarnevelt noticed the general desire for peace, and letters from De Sailly kept him informed of the progress of the negotiations at Vervins. He learned that "the King does not want to sign the treaty without prior discussions with our delegates and with those from the Queen of England".⁵³ On 3 April the Pensionary met Robert Cecil, the English representative, in Angers where the royal court stayed at the time. Cecil

⁵²"ofte hem doen delogeren, waeruyt wel een generale revolte jegens de Spanjaerden soude mogen volgen". Van Deventer, II, p. 174 (Memo for Justinus van Nassau and Oldenbarnevelt by the States-General, January 1598).

⁵³"le roy ne vouloit nouer le traicte, avant voir veu nos deputés et ceulx de la Reine". Haak, I, p.376 (Sailly to Oldenbarnevelt, 3 March 1598).

explained that peace was a possibility for France and England. His mission was "to see that this could be accomplished with the least harm and prejudice" to the Dutch.⁵⁴

During Oldenbarnevelt's first interview with the King the immovable Dutch attitude became clear. All efforts of Henry to bring his desires for peace into harmony with the alliance of 1596 had been in vain. The King had even accepted Calatagirone's offer of papal support to help Spanish negotiators obtain from their King authorization to deal with English and Dutch representatives. During the interview the Pensionary congratulated Henry upon the victories at Amiens and over Mercoeur. These events would make it possible for the King "to continue the just, honest and necessary war against Spain". Military plans for the coming season did not arouse great enthusiasm in Henry. The latter assured the Dutch that they were his "best and most reliable friends who had assisted him when he was in need". However, "poverty and disease were general among his subjects".

A day later, on 6 April, Oldenbarnevelt discussed the problem with the English delegation and received discouraging replies. Elizabeth had decided on peace despite foreseeable disadvantages, and no further help would be forthcoming; however, she would be willing to discuss

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 419 (Report by Oldenbarnevelt). A complete Dutch account of the Anglo-French-Dutch negotiations prior to the peace of Vervins is given in Haak, I, pp. 407-463.

repayment of loans since England faced many financial problems. The next day, when Villeroy, De Maise and Buzanval informed the Pensionary of Henry's intentions to continue the negotiations for peace at Vervins, Oldenbarnevelt's language became sharp. The Dutch mission had been sent on the premise "that His Majesty would consider the commitments of the alliance treaty and the promise not to negotiate with the enemy". It was unheard of and unbelievable "that the King would desert such a just, honest and necessary war by breaking such solemn promises". Finally Oldenbarnevelt declared his willingness to accompany French delegates to England to discuss all aspects of a continued war.

Henry was impressed. He met with his advisors "until deep in the night". He offered his good offices to obtain a general armistice of four months during which further deliberations would be held. The English delegation offered to negotiate on behalf of the Dutch in Vervins, but Oldenbarnevelt remained adamant, insisting that the war be continued.

Dutch distrust of Spanish peace overtures ran deep. Government records reveal the ever existing fear of Spanish intrigue,⁵⁵ and memories of the attempted

⁵⁵Japikse, VIII, pp. 479-481 and 492-493.

assassination of both Maurice and his brother Frederick Henry⁵⁶ were still too fresh in people's minds to make compromise possible. If any faith existed in Spanish good will, it received a further setback when the newly appointed Dutch ambassador to France, Francois d'Aerssens, reported a capture of Spanish documents which revealed the enemy's intention to attack the Republic and to separate Holland and Zealand.⁵⁷ The Pensionary convinced Cecil that only Elizabeth could keep Henry in the war and urged him to use his influence in this direction. Then Cecil repeated the tactics of De Maise and suggested that an allied strategy conference should be held in London.

On April 8 Oldenbarnevelt had another interview with Henry. The King explained that his country was in need of some temporary relief. Again the Pensionary pointed out how the King's reputation would suffer were he to retract his given word, but the King's mind had been made up. He went so far as to promise repayment of all subsidies the Dutch had advanced. At all costs the war had to be stopped. At the conclusion of the audience Henry requested the Dutch delegation to follow the royal court to the city of

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 193. A certain Mr. Dufoer admitted he had been given money by Spanish officials to kill the Stadholder and was subsequently executed by the Dutch in Bergen-op-Zoom.

⁵⁷Haak, I. pp. 383-384 (Cornelius van Aerssens to Justinus van Nassau and Oldenbarnevelt, 24 March 1598).

Nantes.

Although the King was prepared for strong opposition to peace by the Republic, the forcefulness of the Dutch impressed him. He informed his delegates in Vervins that "truthfully, I have found them so fiercely opposed to peace that only with great difficulty have I made them understand the reasons and the need which forced me to approve the opening of negotiations".⁵⁸ Henry had not given up all hope of success. He was inclined to believe that Cecil would send one of his delegates to Vervins to study the Spanish authority to negotiate with the Queen. As far as the Dutch were concerned, Henry urged his negotiators to press for an armistice during which the Dutch probably would soften their stand and agree to a peace.⁵⁹

Hope for Dutch interests suddenly was reborn when the English delegation changed its position. Robert Cecil suggested English aid for an attack on Calais, and when Henry refused the idea Cecil and Oldenbarnevelt insisted on a combined meeting of both foreign missions with the complete royal council. Although there is no conclusive evidence that this tactic was the result of any prior

⁵⁸"à vous dire la verité, je les ay trouvez au commencement si farouches et alienez de la paix qu'a grande peine ay-je peu seulement les rendre capables des raisons et necessitez qui m'ont forcé de permettre que la negotiation en ait esté entamée" Memoire Historique, I, p. 379.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 381.

Anglo-Dutch consultation, the strategy displayed during the session does not preclude the existence of some form of understanding. Henry did not attend in person but left the foreigners to argue with his advisors.

The combined meeting took place on 19 April. Cecil opened the discussions and re-affirmed the English stand that peace was desirable provided the Dutch would be reconciled to it. Since this was not the case he saw no alternative but to continue the war. Oldenbarnevelt responded with an exposition of the Dutch view. After the recent victories the Pensionary saw no reason to conclude a peace and wondered why Henry was willing to abandon his allies. He warned the French and English not to underestimate a nation "that for so long already had resisted Spanish ambitions". Then Cecil emphasized the gravity of the Dutch position and stated that it was essential for him to report to Elizabeth and to await further instructions. Meanwhile, he promised "adequate aid for particular undertakings" and urged Henry to repay the huge advances his Queen had made to him.

Oldenbarnevelt was pleased with the changed English attitude while Cecil thanked the Pensionary for his frankness. Henry did not share in the happiness. A day later, Buzanval informed the Dutch of the King's decision to continue negotiations at Vervins, and of Henry's promise to obtain a three months' armistice for all belligerents. Again the

Dutch refused and stated their intention to continue the war with or without French participation.

Henry feared a developing Anglo-Dutch alliance which might turn anti-French were the grinding Spanish-Dutch war to come to a halt. To keep the struggle going he promised extensive French aid: 200,000 ecus per year during 1598 and 1599, to be raised to 300,000 ecus yearly for the following three years. On 26 April, during the final audience with the Dutch delegation, Henry expressed his hopes that the States-General would feel assured of His Majesty's sincere affection, favor, and friendship.

On 2 May Spanish and French negotiators concluded their discussions and signed the treaty of Vervins. The temporary armistice was meaningless, since it was not accepted by the Dutch and English. Henry was disappointed and expressed his dismay about the dissatisfaction his allies had shown with him in a letter to Bellievre and Sillery. He promised the English to postpone the ratification of the treaty for forty days. As far as the Dutch were concerned, Henry found them "even more opposed to peace and more difficult to rule than in the beginning".⁶⁰ He consoled himself with the knowledge of having "satisfactorily lived up to the duties of his faith".⁶¹ The treaty of Vervins reaffirmed

⁶⁰"/trouver sur la fin/ encore plus durs à la paix et difficiles à gouverner qu'au commencement" Ibid., II, p.4.

⁶¹"suffisamment satisfait pour ce regard au devoir de ma foy" Ibid., p. 7.

the clauses of Cateau-Cambresis (1559), and Henry agreed to recognize the Spanish claim to the Burgundian heritage.

England remained committed to the war with Spain along with the implacable Dutch who had won more than Elizabeth wished. After the failure of Philip's expeditions to Ireland, the struggle had lost its urgency to the Queen. Renewed Spanish domination of the Netherlands would make restitution of English investments in the territories highly unlikely, however. Oldenbarnevelt realized a danger that England might come to terms with Spain and hand over the towns it occupied in Zeeland in return for commercial and religious concessions. French withdrawal from the war had changed its basic characteristics, and the Pensionary decided to return to the Hague via London.

France was at peace with Spain although Henry was not certain that he was free of war. The vagueness of the English "who talk in such uncertainty and in varying terms about the desires of their Mistress that I cannot determine whether she wants peace or the continuation of the war",⁶² forced Henry to be on guard for any eventuality. This very uncertainty might have serious repercussions at home where Henry had to come to terms with the Huguenots.

⁶²"ont parlé si incertainement et diversement de la volonté de leur maitresse, que je ne puis comprendre si elle veut la paix, ou si veut continuer la guerre" Lettres Missives, IV, p. 973 (Henry to the Constable, 4 May 1598).

He hoped "they would not unite themselves out of desperation with the English and the Dutch and start an even more dangerous war in my kingdom than the one we want to terminate".⁶³ Thus, political isolation and the threat of civil war were the price Henry paid for a separate peace with Spain. The peace of Vervins shattered a long standing structure of French alliances and left the country exposed to foreign attacks during the difficult years of internal reconstruction.

⁶³"qu'ils ne se joignissent au desespoir des Anglois et Hollandois pour susciter en mon royaume une guerre plus dangereuse que celle que nous voulons esteindre": Ibid., IV (Henry to the Duke de Piney-Luxembourg, 21 April 1598).

CHAPTER II

STRAINS OF ALLIANCE

Although Henry IV's endeavours for a general peace with the Habsburgs were shattered by the events leading to the treaty of Vervins, his thoughts of a European settlement had certainly been in line with existing military and social realities. The war itself had reached a stalemate as none of the belligerents was able to administer a decisive blow. Poverty and disease in France were matched by the suffering Spanish mutinies inflicted upon the population of the Southern Netherlands. The Republic was strained to the limit to maintain a mere defensive war while English aloofness to continental involvement had become even more noticeable after the Irish rebellions.

For the moment, however, Dutch money seemed to satisfy Elizabethan greed and British interests. On 26 August 1598, a new Anglo-Dutch treaty came into effect.¹ The agreement of Westminster provided the Queen with continued influence in Dutch affairs, with solid naval support, and above all with the hope of seeing a return of

¹Jan den Tex, Oldenbarnevelt (3 vols.; Haarlem: H. D. Tjeenk Willink & Zoon, 1962), II, p. 332.

her financial investments in the Dutch cause. In addition, continued Spanish-Dutch hostilities which it provided for would limit Habsburg aid to the Irish. In actual military terms the new alliance was shallow. Its main importance for the Dutch was that it gave them a major paper ally which in due time could be exchanged for some more solid French support.

The French withdrawal from the war gave rise to new speculations. Henry hoped that the opportunity had arrived to restore French prestige on the Continent. As a neutral state, France would hold the new balance of power. It could influence either side in the conflict, could look for constant gains and would still emerge as a peace maker. The King liked the role of arbitrator, especially when no particular French interests were at stake. Henry instructed his ambassador in the Levant to offer French offices in a mediation between the Turks and the Emperor.² An honorable peace that would settle this centuries old conflict would result in greater recognition of Henry's person and would enhance his prestige everywhere. The required diplomatic activities for a settlement would involve new contacts, which might lead to increased trade and prosperity. Thus, his hands would be

²Lettres Missives, V, p. 39 (Henry to De Brèves, 1 October 1598).

strengthened in a search for acceptable compromises among rival factions at home. And indeed, the King's prestige grew rapidly. Aerssens reported that in spite of widespread opposition to the Edict of Nantes, the decree soon would be registered because of an upsurge in royal prestige.³

Shortly after the peace of Vervins Henry felt strong enough to intervene again in the affairs of a confused and exhausted Europe. He challenged Savoy for the Marquisate of Saluces. Chances of immediate Spanish intervention were minimal as long as Spain remained burdened with the Dutch war. Thus, in violation of the terms of Vervins, Henry began to support the Dutch. He justified his actions by arguing that

although he had just bound himself to Spain to give no assistance to the Provinces, open or secret, he would furnish them with thirteen hundred thousand crowns, payable at intervals during four years. He was under great obligations to his good friends the States, he said, and nothing in the treaty forbade him to pay his debts.⁴

Henry's altruistic rationalization was based on solid French interests. Perhaps Peter Geyl's claim that the King hoped "to obtain sovereignty over the Dutch

³Vreede, I, p. 74 (Aerssens to the States-General, 29 January 1599).

⁴John L. Motley, The Life and Death of John of Barneveld (2 vols.; New York and London: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1904), I. p. 17.

provinces which twenty years before had been offered to his predecessor"⁵ is too strong an assumption in the light of his recent failures to make them accept a general peace. Moreover, the destruction of the recent war had left France too scarred to undertake such an ambitious program at the moment. But there is no doubt that Henry planned to extend French influence in the Netherlands. Several years later, when all hopes of a realization of dynastic aspirations in the Republic obviously had become impossible, the King continued to draw a distinction between liberty and sovereignty.⁶ For the moment, however, French financial contributions would heal the dented friendship between Henry and the Dutch. It would keep Spain preoccupied and provide a reasonable obstruction to a growing English influence in the Republic.

The first installment of Henry's financial support left France as early as October 1598.⁷ It was to be followed by much more. Perhaps more important than men and money was the King's dependence upon the Dutch. Henry's flexibility towards them, even in the face of pure ar-

⁵Pieter Geyl, Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse Stam (6 vols.; Amsterdam and Antwerp: Wereldbibliotheek, 1961), II, p. 397.

⁶Motley, I, p. 33 (Aerssens to Oldenbarnevelt, 14 January 1609).

⁷Lettres Missives, V, p. 40 (Henry to Sully, 2 October 1598).

rogance, revealed a strange political mixture of need and greed. Without Dutch political support Henry would be isolated. A Spanish victory in the Netherlands meant a return to the Habsburg encirclement of France of the beginning of the century while an Anglo-Dutch victory might leave France exposed as a pawn between the Spanish and mercantile power blocs. Thus, if France wanted to contain British influence in the Lowlands without favoring the Habsburg cause, it had to find a modus vivendi with the Dutch. At a later date, when a rejuvenated France would be able to throw its full military potential behind clear political objectives in the Netherlands, it might realize some territorial expansion northwards. Therefore, Henry did not keep his support of the Dutch to a minimum when Buzanval reported that the Republic was in no danger of collapsing as long as England remained in the conflict.⁸ Neither did he protest strongly when Dutch policy decisions encroached upon French sovereignty, as will be demonstrated later.

The French withdrawal from the war also lead to speculations on the Spanish side. Cardinal Albert, who since 1596 had waged a frustrating two-front war, saw his status of governor changed to that of hereditary prince. Whatever loss of prestige was caused by his defrockment

⁸Vreede, I, p. 10 (Buzanval to Henry, 28 October 1598).

was easily compensated for by his marriage to the Spanish Infanta. All in all, a new form of government for the Spanish Netherlands, increased subsidies from Madrid and the prospects of a single front war brought hopes for an early Spanish victory.

Even before the Spanish Netherlands had become an autonomous satellite, Albert's talents had drawn widespread attention. The Pope had appointed Cardinal Frangipani as the first permanent papal representative in Brussels, for apparently Rome, too, had expected a general European peace. The presence of a special delegate in the midst of all this turmoil might be extremely useful. Not only would it provide ample opportunity for mediation but it also would constitute a protective vigil over catholic interests in any settlement. Calatagirone's peace mission, which eventually resulted in the treaty of Vervins, had had its origins and headquarters in Brussels.

At first glance, the appointment of Albert and Isabella as sovereign rulers of the Spanish Netherlands had lost much of its potential for calming the revolt by the continued presence of Spanish troops in Antwerp, Ghent, and Cambrai. Numerous restrictions of actual independence for the area tended to make a farce of the whole reorganization. Recent studies, however, have emphasized the

independent approach taken by the Archdukes.⁹ Albert and Isabella did not undertake a major political program without prior consultation and permission from Spain. Their initiatives and diplomatic pressures, however, seem to have guided Spanish foreign policy of the period. If Spain had displayed a greater degree of flexibility and urgency in political activities, if the personal relationships between Albert and Philip III had been a little more cordial and the outward symbols of Spanish authority in the Lowlands a little less obvious, the Archdukes might have been more successful in their search for an acceptable compromise with the Dutch. There was no lack of initiative on Albert's side, even if he angered the Flemish by his constant refusal to recognize the legitimate functions of the Estates-General. At one time he considered the idea of declaring the Southern Netherlands neutral in the Spanish conflict¹⁰ to alleviate the suffering of his subjects, and after the death of Elizabeth of England, he sent a peace mission to her successor and urged Spain to do the same.¹¹

The political situation deteriorated while the

⁹J. A. Van Houtte, ed., Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden (12 vols.; Utrecht: Uitgeversmaatschappij W. de Haan, 1952), V, pp. 272-273.

¹⁰Correspondance, no. 312, 315.

¹¹Ibid., no. 251, 278.

Archdukes were in Spain for their marriage, 1598-1599. Mutinies were the order of the day while the Republic succeeded in holding and consolidating its position. Dutch hopes that the southern regions would make common cause with them never materialized, although the return of the ruling couple was not extremely joyful as far as their new subjects were concerned.¹²

The transfer of the Spanish Netherlands to the rule of the Archdukes had taken place with the necessary conditions that stipulated the authority of the new rulers and their relationship with the Spanish government, including an article that provided for diplomatic negotiations with the rebellious Dutch.¹³ Albert and Isabella were permitted to search for an acceptable compromise which would unify the Netherlands under Habsburg sovereignty. The changed positions of relative strength during the absence of the Archdukes had hardened Dutch demands, and the Republic rejected any form of compromise short of complete independence.¹⁴ The attitudes on both sides were so solid that even a spectacular military victory by the Dutch at Nieuwpoort did not cause a dent. All channels

¹²Vreede, I, p. 231 (Buzanval to Villeroy, 13 July 1599).

¹³Palma Cayet, p. 15.

¹⁴Japikse, X, p. 559.

of communication were closed.

Several legal problems required immediate attention of all parties concerned. Spanish sea-captains were selling their prizes in the ports of northern France much to the displeasure of the Dutch. As a result of the latter's protests Henry ordered this practice to be discontinued¹⁵ and closed all French ports to foreign naval vessels.

More complicated was the question of hot pursuit of enemy vessels in neutral French waters. This argument was settled by the Dutch. After two Spanish vessels stranded on the French coast had been taken to Holland, the protesting governor of Calais was informed that Dutch ships "were permitted to pursue the enemy anywhere with orders to capture, even within the harbors of France".¹⁶ Henry did not voice an official protest. This attitude was even more striking in the light of Henry's response to less significant English trespasses. When Elizabeth demanded that a Spanish crew be handed over, she was told that the treaty of Vervins granted permission to Spaniards "to land in our kingdom, and remain there and to embark

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 65, p. 475, p. 479. See also Vreede, I, p. 205 (Buzanval to Villeroy, 12 June 1599).

¹⁶ "den vyant sullen moegen vervolgen t'allen plaitzen, daer zy hem sullen weeten te crygen ende achterhalen, oyck tot in de havenen van Vranckerycke". Japikse, X, p. 482.

again for a return to Spain".¹⁷ Henry's answer could have been influenced by English humiliations of French sailors in the Levant,¹⁸ but these relatively minor offences by themselves do not account for such varied treatment.

The Dutch were annoyed that Spanish ships were being refitted in French harbors. French commercial advantages of employment and trade made an acceptable solution difficult. A compromise agreement was negotiated between the governor of Calais and the States-General. It was decided that Spanish vessels outfitted in French ports could not engage in any act of war until they first had entered the port of Dunkirk. A French concession read that the blockade of Dunkirk should be applied to any French ship sailing to that city.¹⁹ Again Henry remained an outsider during the negotiations, but the episode certainly did not escape him.

Philip III's embargo of Dutch trade was followed by a similar step in the Southern Netherlands. On 9 February 1599, the Archdukes decreed that all trade with Holland and Zealand had to be stopped. Thus, the Dutch were to be deprived of their sources of power. On 2 April

¹⁷"de prendre terre en nostre royaume, et demeurer et s'y rembarquer pour s'en retourner en Espagne". Lettres Missives, V, p. 169 (Henry to the Queen of England, 5 October 1599).

¹⁸Ibid., p. 187 (Henry to De Brèves, 24 November 1599).

¹⁹Rijperman, XII, pp. 85-88.

the States-General responded. All trade "by water or by land"²⁰ with the territories under control of Spain or the Archdukes was forbidden. To emphasize the applicability of the decree to France the States-General decided to order Aerssens to explain it according to precedents of international law.²¹

This time France objected. Even before the edict had been issued Buzanval had approached Oldenbarnevelt. The former did not dispute the legality of the action but concentrated on the wisdom of including France.²² On 2 April Villeroy immediately suggested moderation to the Dutch. In an interview with Aerssens Henry's councillor mentioned that Bellièvre and others had spoken sharply against the decree.²³

The Dutch moved cautiously. They were fully aware that a Franco-Dutch trade war would be disastrous to them. Their trade with France had developed to such degree that Henry had the power "to do more damage than the Spanish King".²⁴ The Pensionary informed Buzanval that the Dutch

²⁰"te water ofte lande". Japikse, X, p. 784.

²¹Ibid., p. 476.

²²Vreede, I, p. 160 (Buzanval to Villeroy, 8 May 1599).

²³"les parolles dures et aigres". Ibid., p. 161.

²⁴"dat syne Mat doer dese middel U.E.M. grooter afbreuck soude common te doen, dan den Co. van Spaignen". Vreede, I, p. 71 (Aerssens to the States-General, 29 January 1599).

navy under Pieter Van der Does had been instructed not to interfere with French vessels that were leaving Spanish ports. Ships sailing to Spain would be returned to their home ports. Oldenbarnevelt even offered to delay the sailing of the navy until Henry's answer had been received. His willingness to avoid a sharp confrontation went so far that it astonished Buzanval.²⁵ The latter gave his blessings to the departing fleet, and no further criticism was heard. Henry's silence, thus, could be understood as tacit approval of the policy, and his support "would not be obvious to Spain".²⁶

The Spanish trade embargo was part of a grand design to force a Dutch defeat, but it was a complete failure. Famines in Portugal and parts of Spain made a rigid enforcement of the edict undesirable, while constant smuggling in the Southern Netherlands quietly replaced existing trade. Nonetheless, Spanish prospects looked bright. France and Spain were at peace. English negotiators were conferring with their Spanish counterparts at Boulogne, and agreement between the two was so generally expected that even Henry was convinced that a settlement would be arrived at shortly.²⁷ And a new Spanish military

²⁵Ibid., p. 161 (Buzanval to Villeroy, 8 May 1599).

²⁶"maer zoe, dat hy niet en begeert, dat die Spaignaerden dat opentylck zouden mercken". Ibid., p. 73 (Aerssens to the States-General, 29 January 1599).

²⁷Lettres Missives, V. p. 187 (Henry to De Brèves, 24 November 1599).

offensive against the Dutch was being prepared.

The military feature of the great Habsburg effort was a massive attack on the eastern boundaries of the Republic. Palma Cayet estimated the total force at 25,000 foot soldiers supported by 28 companies of cavalry.²⁸ Spanish confidence was great enough to persuade the makers of the policy to risk dissatisfaction in the German Rhineland by moving their troops through these regions, and dissatisfaction there was in plenty. Spanish looting, killings and burnings infuriated the Germans, and letters of protest were sent to Vienna, Madrid, Brussels, Paris, and the Hague. The Emperor discussed the formation of an army to expel the Spanish forces,²⁹ but his Turkish wars made this impossible. The Germans of the Rhineland threatened to halt their contributions to the imperial war chest and planned to field a regional army, but internal dissension and religious differences made this idea a failure too. Similar distrust was responsible for ineffective co-operation with the Dutch. The latter's offer of aid was accepted, but the prevailing desire to remain neutral in the bigger conflict made the Germans reject a common military effort.

Henry watched the situation with care. He ignored appeals for assistance to repel the invaders. France was

²⁸Palma Cayet, p. 30.

²⁹Ibid., p. 57.

unable to embark on a war, and Buzanval, who had followed the Dutch army in the field, reported that German anger would not be permanent.³⁰ The Dutch were not in real danger, he said, and he suggested that France continue its aid so that the military positions could be kept.³¹

Henry's participation in the war was as great as could be expected under the circumstances. He consented to the hiring of French troops, but the number of them actively engaged in battle became embarrassing. The Spanish ambassador complained about it, and Henry admitted that "he had not intended it, and wanted to observe the peace in all sincerity".³² To save face he ordered that the property of those who joined the Dutch, as well as of those who would not return within half a year, would be confiscated.³³ Half a year was a long time, and delay of action was one of the King's favorite devices in such crises. Meanwhile, the King welcomed the Spanish commitment and turned to Saluces.

In spite of all French aid, the Dutch remained in

³⁰Ibid., I, p. 234 (Buzanval to Villeroy, 20 July 1599).

³¹Ibid., I, p. 256 (Buzanval to Villeroy, 10 August 1599).

³²"qu'il ne l'entendoit pas, et vouloit de bonne foy observer la paix". Palma Cayet, p. 64.

³³Ibid.

firm control of strategy. When Buzanval, on Henry's behalf, suggested that the time for offensive action had arrived, he was told that a defensive war was more exhausting to the enemy. "One should not gamble if one could obtain the desired goal without any risk".³⁴ The answer was not meant as a flagrant rejection of Henry's views. It only emphasized independent decision making. From time to time the King was recognized. The drawings of battle plans and fortifications were sent to him for inspection. This kindness also had other reasons. Defensive wars were expensive because of their duration. Thus the remark: "Well, as you see on one piece of paper is all the toil of four or five months of war".³⁵

The great Spanish offensive came to nothing. Maurice of Nassau successfully prevented the invading forces from crossing the Rhine River, and the long wet summer of 1599 caused widespread disease among the troops on both sides. When the Dutch recaptured Doetichem later in the year, the Spanish army withdrew. The huge expenditures of the campaign had added only Fort St. Andrew on the Meuse to the territories of the Archdukes.

When the actual danger of the Spanish attack abated,

³⁴"qu'il ne falloir hazarder quand on pouvait l'avoir sans hazard: ce qu'on pretendoit". Vreede, I, p. 256 (Buzanval to Villeroy, 10 August 1599).

³⁵"Enfin, vous verrez en une feuille de papier l'ouvrage de quatre ou cinq mois de guerre". Ibid., p. 265 (Buzanval to Villeroy, 20 August 1599).

there had been some discussion of the possibilities of a Dutch offensive. Oldenbarnevelt continued to emphasize to Buzanval that France had never been in a more favorable condition towards the Habsburgs since the old controversy had commenced.³⁶ Maurice advised against an offensive campaign in 1599; perhaps during the next year, he said, if enough money would be available. "And in this difficulty, as I have told you, they cast their eyes upon us",³⁷ wrote the French ambassador.

Dutch victories had not come easily. The military stalemate on the eastern front and the garrisons on the southern border were costly and almost as exhausting to the Republic as they were to the governments in Brussels and Madrid. English participation had to be bought, and its contributions in the field were small. The navy had to be kept up to protect Dutch trade and to blockade the Spanish coasts. The vast expenses of the war were not always contributed willingly by the provinces and provided constant worry to the Pensionary.

French subsidies were essential for a Dutch victory and had a habit of remaining continually below requested levels. Aerssens' continual references to the insufficiency

³⁶Ibid., p. 248 (Buzanval to Villeroy, 1 August 1599).

³⁷"et on cette difficulté, comme je vous ay dit, on jette les yeux sur nous". Ibid., p. 324 (Buzanval to Villeroy, 8 December 1599).

of French aid "what I emphasize most to His Majesty",³⁸ became monotonous and acquired an unpleasant connotation. Henry claimed that France was still too poor for greater contributions and tried to appease the Dutch with verbal encouragement in their heroic struggle. References to former aid to the King were too plentiful, and Aerssens suggested a different approach. "Reciting your services of the past is no longer accepted in good taste: to the contrary one understands a reference to simple assistance, without preliminary conditions".³⁹

In French circles, Sully, Villeroy, and Buzanval were the staunchest supporters of the Dutch. Buzanval defended the Dutch repeatedly and insisted that substantial aid was imperative.⁴⁰ He described the Republic as the place where the real European questions were being settled.⁴¹ He was impressed by "the strength of this small

³⁸"que je presse le plus pres de Sa Ma^{te}". Van Deventer, II, p. 283 (Aerssens to Oldenbarnevelt, 31 December 1599).

³⁹"ne prend-on plus de goust au recit de vos services passez; au contraire entend-on que l'imputiez a pure ayde, sans prealable obligation". Ibid.

⁴⁰Vreede, I, p. 107 (Buzanval to Henry, 23 February 1599).

⁴¹"Car c'est aujourdhy le Tablier, sur lequel le sort et le dé se jettera de celles de l'Europe". Ibid., p. 126 (Buzanval to Villeroy, 22 March 1599).

state which could maintain simultaneously, at such great expense, endeavours both at sea and on land, and all this without a voice of dissent by anyone, in a country composed of so many moods and opinions".⁴²

Buzanval tried to overcome Henry's distaste for the type of government in the Republic by emphasizing the order in it and the temporary nature of the aid required.

Everything is done here in the way it is carried out in an established country that has enjoyed great peace for over one hundred years. And trust Sir, that if this form of government will not be supported, we shall not forever have this fortress between the grandeur and ambitions of the House of Austria and our own weak country.⁴³

The ambassador's broad vision certainly influenced Henry. The King realized that insufficient aid implied leaving to Spain "the work and expenses of the thirty years

⁴²"la vigueur de ce petit Etat de pouvoir fournir en même temps à de si grandes dépenses et entreprises par mer et par terre, et ce sans rumeur ou plainte quelconque dans le pays composé de si diverses humeurs et intentions". Ibid., p. 193 (Buzanval to Villeroy, 1 June 1599).

⁴³"tout y va en même sorte qu'il feroit en un Etat, qui jouiroit depuis cent ans d'une profonde paix. Et croyez, Monsieur, qu'il ne tiendra qu' au cas que cecy demoure en la forme qu'il est, et que nous ne tenions toujours cette forte barrière fermée entre la grandeur et l'ambition de la Maison d'Autriche, et la foiblesse de nostre Etat". Ibid., pp. 194-195 (Buzanval to Villeroy, 11 June 1599).

that one has devoted to the establishment of this state".⁴⁴ He refused Spanish requests that Aerssens' passport should not be granted, that Buzanval should be recalled and that La Noue, a French commander in Dutch service, should be punished.⁴⁵ The King also realized his stake in the war and the advantages that could be derived from it. "The affairs of my kingdom are looking brighter every day, to my great contentment".⁴⁶ In the same letter to the ambassador in the Levant Henry referred to the situation in the Republic where matters "had taken a completely different turn for Archduke Albert and the Spaniards; because the Dutch have proved themselves so strong that the others have almost gained nothing from them this year; they have been forced to withdraw from the two sieges they had undertaken".⁴⁷

Half a year later, in July 1600, Henry informed the same diplomat that a French war with Spain was imminent,

⁴⁴"les labeurs et les dépenses de trente années, qu'on a employé a l'establissement de cet Etat". Ibid., p. 296 (Buzanval to Villeroy, 10 October 1599).

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 187 (Aerssens to the States-General, 16 June 1599).

⁴⁶"les affaires de mon royaume vont s'establissant et prosperant de jour en jour, à mon grand contentement". Lettres Missives, V, p. 144 (Henry to De Breves, 1 July 1599).

⁴⁷"prennent tout autre chemin pour l'Archiduc Albert et les Espagnols, car les Etats des Provinces-Unies se sont rendus so forts, que les autres n'ont peu rien gagner sur eux ceste année; ayant este constraints de se despart de deux sieges qu'ils avoient entrepris". Ibid., p. 144.

that "I am on the eve of commencing war".⁴⁸ At that time an abortive Dutch attempt to conquer Dunkirk brought a strong army close to Henry's frontiers. The pressure to re-enter the war was acute if France wanted to share in the spoils of a war that might end in a Dutch victory.

However, matters were not as urgent in the closing days of 1599, and Henry preferred to limit his support to encouragement and restricted aid. He refused the Archduke's request for mediation. A compromise with the Dutch could be arrived at if the rebels were willing to accept only one condition, that of simple recognition of Albert's sovereignty.⁴⁹ The Archdukes implied that Maurice of Nassau too would prefer a settlement "since he should know from many examples not to wait for ingratitude when serving a democracy, because during all the time he has served them [the Dutch], they never even considered a marriage for him".⁵⁰

French mediation in eastern Europe was one thing, bringing the Dutch war to a close for the benefit of the

⁴⁸"elle me voit al la veille d'entrer en guerre". Ibid., p. 248 (Henry to De Brèves, 10 July 1599).

⁴⁹"qu'on lui avoue simple reconnaissance". Haak, I, p. 551 (Aerssens to Oldenbarnevelt, 31 December 1599).

⁵⁰"puisqu'il savoit par tant d'exemples qu'il ne falloit attendre qu'ingratitude de servir au public une democratie: que depuis le temps qu'il avoit servy on n'avait pas seulement pense' à le marier". Ibid., p. 552.

Habsburgs was another. When Henry's lack of enthusiasm became apparent, Albert forced the mediation effort onto the shoulders of an Imperial delegation. But the members of the States-General had agreed secretly, prior to the arrival of the diplomats in the Hague, that they would deal with them in a completely negative fashion.⁵¹

Then the Spaniards attempted to sow dissension among the Dutch leadership. They claimed that Maurice was needed in Hungary to lead the Imperial armies against the Turks.⁵² For Oldenbarnevelt there would be a royal pardon, even if he had rendered such great disservice to the Spanish King.⁵³ It was no surprise to anyone, except to Albert perhaps, that the Dutch rejected all overtures.⁵⁴

For a short moment the battle of Nieuwpoort, July 1600, caused some international commotion and gave some color to diplomatic relationships. Maurice had favored a naval attack on Dunkirk but had been overruled by the members of the States-General. The latter were constantly aware of the "state of uncertainty to which they saw them-

⁵¹Japikse, XI, p. 122.

⁵²Palma Cayet, p. 19.

⁵³Haak, I, p. 552 (Aerssens to Oldenbarnevelt, 31 December 1599).

⁵⁴Japikse, X, p. 559. also see above p. 34.

selves reduced by English as well as by our own French apprehensions, and preferred to gamble".⁵⁵ The army was sent to Dunkirk. This pirates' lair was never reached, but Maurice gave battle on the sandy dunes of the Flemish coasts, and routed a whole Spanish army. Queen Elizabeth rejoiced. When Caron, the Dutch agent in London, "dirty and full of mud because of the weather", informed her of the feat, "she displayed such a great demonstration of happiness that I was astonished".⁵⁶

French reaction was different. No doubt, the King was happy about the Spanish defeat, but he did not desire the end of the war as Queen Elizabeth did. His hopes for entering the war, now the opportune time had arrived, soon gave way to disappointment and criticism. Shortly after the battle at Nieuwpoort Henry had written that the action

⁵⁵"l'etat incertain auquel ils se voyent reduits par les apprehensions et d'Angleterre et de notre France mesme, ayant mieux hazarder ce coup de dé". Vreede, II, p. 77 (Buzanval to Villeroy, 2 July 1600).

⁵⁶"vuil en beslyckt door 't quade weder ... dat sy sulcke demonstratie van blytschap in dese goede nieuwmaren toonde dat ick my self daerin verwonderde". Van Deventer, II, p. 291 (Caron to the States-General, 28 June 1600). The date of this letter is obviously wrong since the battle of Nieuwpoort did not take place until 2 July 1600 as is reported by P. J. Blok, P. L. Muller, S. Muller, eds., Robert Fruin's Verspreide Geschriften, met aantekeningen, toevoegsels en verbeteringen uit des schrijvers nalatenschap (10 vols.; 's Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1901), III, p. 637. Elizabeth sent a letter of congratulations to the States-General on July 8 (Van Deventer, II, p. 292) and Caron's letter must have been written on July 7 or 8.

"can only greatly favor my business with the mentioned Duke of Savoy".⁵⁷ This and subsequent actions revealed his emphasis on French interests that were served by the war, and since the battle was not followed up by French gains in the Netherlands, he turned bitter. When he was informed of an upsurge in popular support of Albert in his home country, and when a Spanish fleet inflicted heavy casualties on Dutch fishing vessels, the King became angry. His plans had been spoilt by the "poor management of our victory",⁵⁸ and he claimed that Maurice had passed the stage of being a "great captain; this title can only be acquired by taking risks".⁵⁹

In 1526, Francis I had surrendered his claims to Flanders, Artois, and Franche Comté to Charles V by the treaty of Madrid. Henry wanted to undo this settlement. Oldenbarnevelt did not object to the idea and had promised Dutch support. France could dominate areas in the Spanish Netherlands as long as the Republic would remain in control of the coastal regions.⁶⁰

⁵⁷"ne peut que beaucoup favoriser mes affaires avec le dict Duc de Savoy". Lettres Missives, V, p. 251 (Henry to the Constable, 12 July 1600).

⁵⁸"mauvais mesnage de vostre victoire". Haak, I, p. 570 (Aerssens to Oldenbarnevelt, 31 December 1600).

⁵⁹"Il ne sera donc pas grand capitaine ce titre ne s'acquièrt qu'en hasardant". Van Deventer II, p. 328 (Aerssens to Oldenbarnevelt, 16 August 1602).

⁶⁰Vreede, II, pp. 83-84 (Buzanval to Villeroy, August 1600).

During the first three years of the seventeenth century the defense of Ostend received great international attention. The conquest of this new Troy would increase Albert's prestige in the wake of great general sympathy for the Dutch underdogs. Queen Elizabeth sent troops and consented to the appointment of Sir Francis Vere as the temporary commander of the city.⁶¹ Also Henry was excited. His military instincts had been aroused and he had not forgotten his plans in the Southern Netherlands. In August 1601 he suddenly travelled to Calais for a visit "to the frontiers of his country"⁶² and to receive "news from the Dutch, which is the main object of my journey".⁶³ He resorted to an anti-Spanish Philippic for apparent propaganda purposes. Henry claimed that his ambassador's house had been broken into⁶⁴ and announced his readiness to go to war, if necessary.⁶⁵

⁶¹Japikse, XI, p. 414.

⁶²Sully, IV, p. 35.

⁶³"d'ess nouvelles de Hollande qui estoit principal subject de mon voyage". Lettres Missives, V, pp. 464-465 (Henry to the Queen of England, 7 September 1601).

⁶⁴"la maison de mon ambassadeur a este forcé". Ibid., p. 447 (Henry to the Constable, 4 August 1601).

⁶⁵"ne veut estre pris au depourveu. S'il faut que nous rentrions à la guerre". Ibid., 462 (Henry to Marshal d'Ornando, 2 September 1601).

Henry claimed that participation in the war was not his intention but neither was he "inclined to suffer an offence".⁶⁶ To lay the groundwork for some solid Anglo-French co-operation in case of an armed conflict with Spain, and in an effort to restrict English influence in the Netherlands, Sully was sent to England. He met the Queen in Dover, and during the discussions that followed both countries agreed to the obvious: the Seventeen Provinces should be liberated from Spanish domination, and neither England nor France should receive any permanent gains from it.⁶⁷ Again it was the omnipresent jealousy between the two that decided the issue.

Elizabeth was greatly interested in Henry's proposals. She requested Caron to return to the Hague and to inform the States-General of the latest French objectives. In spite of a priori agreements, England hoped to regain its influence in Calais⁶⁸ and welcomed any French participation in the war. Henry's leadership was acceptable to the Queen as long as Maurice would remain entrusted with military command.⁶⁹

⁶⁶"encore dispose d'endurer une injure". Ibid.

⁶⁷Sully, IV. P. 43.

⁶⁸Van Deventer, II, p. 309 (Aerssens to Oldenbarnevelt, 22 February 1602).

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 296 (Caron to the States-General, 7 September 1601).

Henry wrote to Sully that he was "very much at ease now we have taken such good resolutions".⁷⁰ He was dreaming again of a great military alliance⁷¹ in which practically all of non-Habsburg Europe would take part. The plan came to nothing. Villeroy and other members of the council convinced the King that France could not afford another war. Henry's plans to discuss the whole affair with Oldenbarnevelt or a special Dutch representative⁷² were dropped. Instead, the French monarch stated that Ostend was safe.⁷³

The port of Ostend had no particular military significance. It had become a prestige question between the Dutch and Habsburg forces, and the struggle was watched by all European powers.⁷⁴ Henry's reference to its safety as a justification of his altered plans was poorly chosen. Maurice was busily engaged to divert Spanish troops away from the city by attacking elsewhere, and even in France the rumor that Ostend had fallen found widespread belief.⁷⁵

⁷⁰"tres aisé que nous prenions quelque bonne resolutions". Lettres Missives, V. p. 472 (Henry to Sully, 19 September 1601).

⁷¹Sully, IV, p. 45.

⁷²Van Deventer, II, p. 297 (Aerssens to Valcke, 9 September 1601).

⁷³Ibid., p. 298 (Aerssens to Valcke, 12 September 1601).

⁷⁴Japikse, XI, p. 433.

⁷⁵Haak, I, p. 631 (Aerssens to Oldenbarnevelt, 30 December 1601).

Probably Henry realized this mistake. He criticized Maurice for the siege of Bois-le-Duc in an obvious effort to change the topic.⁷⁶

A year later, in 1602, Henry informed Aerssens again that he considered war "most certain".⁷⁷ Perhaps suspicions of Spanish encouragement in an unsuccessful attempt on his life had something to do with it.⁷⁸ When Oldenbarnevelt insisted on some greater assurances of the King's sincerity, Henry's answer was very clear: "Conquer the Flemish ports; I will see afterwards".⁷⁹ Apparently, he expected the Dutch to come immediately to the Southern Netherlands with a strong military force because he requested the French ambassador in London to investigate English reaction to a new alliance. If the English "readily accept this proposal, I approve that you sound out their intentions and willingness as meticulously as you can, without committing me in any way, and keep me

⁷⁶Sully, IV, p. 58.

⁷⁷"la guerre toute certaine". Van Deventer II, p. 326 (Aerssens to Oldenbarnevelt, 3 July 1602).

⁷⁸Lettres Missives, V. p. 614 (Henry to De Fresnes, 14 June 1602).

⁷⁹"conquerez les ports de Flandres; je verrai apres". Van Deventer, II, p. 335. (Aerssens to Oldenbarnevelt, 26 September 1602).

informed".⁸⁰

The Dutch did not heed Henry's call, and the King returned to attending his other problems. French moral and financial support of the Dutch had displeased the Pope. Anxiety and fear of Spanish wrath increased. The begging Aerssens realized that his influence was waning,⁸¹ and when Buzanval forwarded an elaborate plan for an allied military campaign he did not stir up much interest either.⁸² Domestic problems and the question of Elizabeth's succession posed a whole array of new possibilities. Dutch eagerness to secure some solid French aid in the wake of uncertainties in the English position were matched by an equally non-committal attitude for similar reasons. The decision had become the problem of James I and a series of European delegations were heading for England to help the new English King make up his mind.

Besides the problem of the Dutch war, the French delegation to England was to discuss the mutual aspects of Anglo-French trade. In February 1603 Philip III had imposed a 30% surtax on all Spanish imports. Since the

⁸⁰"se jettent en ce propos, j'approuve que vous sondiés leurs coeurs et volentez le plus avant que vous pourres, sans toutesfois m'obliger, et que vous m'en advertissiés". Lettres Missives, V, p. 609 (Henry to Beaumont, 13 June 1602).

⁸¹Haak, I, p. 631 (Aerssens to Oldenbarnevelt, 30 September 1601).

⁸²Rijperman, XII, pp. 408-409.

trade between France and Spain had been extremely favorable to French interests, Henry's response of a comparable levy on Spanish products had been ineffective.⁸³ The only ones who had benefited from the trade war were the English smugglers. Perhaps the protestant Sully, who headed the French delegation, might succeed in finding a receptive audience in this field, if James wanted to disassociate himself from the Dutch war without offending the French.

Henry was convinced that "if the two kings could agree to aid the Dutch in secret, peace with Spain would not be of a long duration".⁸⁴ He again suggested the concept of a grand alliance against the Habsburgs to keep England in the war. To make the idea a little more palatable to James, a possible wedding between his eldest daughter and the Dauphin was mentioned. No public declarations were to be made until the actual declaration of an allied war.⁸⁵ Thus, the war or a possible marriage might "revive the House of Burgundy".⁸⁶

The negotiations in London were characterized by the usual flavor of intrigue and by partisan interests.

⁸³Mariéjol, VI, Part II, p. 79.

⁸⁴"si lesdits roys conviennent d'assister secrettement lesdits Estates, comme il sera impossible qu'ils puissent longuement en ce faisant, conserver la paix avec ledit roy d'Espagne". Sully, V, p. 278.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 279.

⁸⁶"resussciter de la maison de Bourgogne". Ibid., pp. 283-284.

The Dutch lobbied for a fishing agreement which would permit them to catch their herring off the Scottish coasts. They also tried to complicate Anglo-French discussions and to arouse suspicion between James and Henry. The French King saw through them but ordered his delegates to avoid a confrontation with Oldenbarnevelt et al.⁸⁷ More important things demanded his attention. "We must expect the worst from Spanish hostility towards me, and fear most anything from the inexperience of the English King".⁸⁸ Dutch bickering could wait. The Republic needed France and vice versa. The real crux of the matter was to find out "if the English King and his ministers had some ideas of uniting with Spain against me".⁸⁹ In that case an effort had to be made to investigate the extent of James' popularity. Perhaps there was a group of people who "harbored schemes to depose the King of England".⁹⁰

⁸⁷Lettres Missives, VI, p. 105 (Henry to Sully, 12 June 1603).

⁸⁸"Il faut tout attendre de l'inimitié que me portent les Espagnols, et tout craindre de l'inexpérience du roy d'Angleterre". Ibid., p. 106.

⁸⁹"si le roy d'Angleterre et ses ministres avoient quelque desseins de s'unir avec le roy d'Espagne contre moy". Ibid., p. 107 (Henry to Sully, 12 June 1603 Il^{me}).

⁹⁰"facent des menées pour disposer le roy d'Angleterre". Ibid.

On 25 June 1603 a form of agreement was reached between England and France. The secret treaty of Hampton Court promised English and French intercession to the Dutch. The kings would request Spain and the Archdukes to leave the Republic "at rest and free from all invasion and hostility".⁹¹ In case Spain were to ignore the request and organize a military campaign, the Republic was permitted to levy troops in England which would be supported by French contributions. James' financial share would consist in a reduction of Dutch debts to England. Provisions were also made for French aid if the agreement should provoke a Spanish attack on the British Isles and vice versa.⁹²

Henry was grateful to Sully and thanked him for everything the latter had negotiated on his behalf.⁹³ But Spanish dealings with James continued, and on August 28 the Dutch saw their English ally conclude a formal peace with Spain. For Henry it meant that he no longer held the

⁹¹"en repos et delivrer de toute invasion et hostilité". Sully v, p. 22.

⁹²Ibid., pp. 22-25. The full text of the agreement of Hampton Court is printed in Du Monts, Corps universel diplomatique du droit des gens (8 vols.; 1726-1731), V, II, p. 30.

⁹³Lettres Missives, VI, p. 131 (Henry to Sully, 10 July 1603).

balance of power in western Europe.

England had become a neutral country. Fortunately for the Republic, James consistently refused closer Anglo-Spanish co-operation. He declined a military alliance, he rebuffed suggestions of imposing trade limitations on the Dutch, and he similarly refused to change the political status of the cautionary towns or to use them in dealings with Spain. But English choices were limited. While James was eager to avoid a costly war, neither did he like to see a Spanish bastion in the Republic. There was also the danger of extended French influence now the English contributions to the Dutch declined. Thus, James I's position was not unlike Henry's, and two decades of war during which Spain had been weakened while the Republic had proved the viability of its illegal independence, had not changed anything in the spectre of Anglo-French rivalry in the Netherlands.

Oldenbarnevelt suggested a visit to both England and France in an effort to obtain aid for Holland. Both kings counseled against this idea, however. James feared that the visit would provoke Spanish suspicions, while Henry foresaw the trip as a possible opportunity for an Anglo-Spanish entente. In reality, both monarchs wanted a pause to reassess their positions.

The year 1603 did not see a major military campaign on either side of the Spanish-Dutch conflict. Henry

had complained about it as an effort in Flanders might have aided French interests at the London conference.⁹⁴ The siege of Ostend continued to inspire the imagination of Europe but in September 1604 the city finally fell. A month before, Maurice had captured the strong Spanish port of Sluis. A campaign to relieve Ostend had been ruled out because of the high regard for the strategic abilities of Ambrosio Spinola and the insignificance of the debris that was called Ostend.

In 1602, Ambrosio Spinola had brought his private army from northern Italy to Flanders. His brother Frederick commanded the Spanish forces in the Netherlands. When Frederick was killed in action, Ambrosio received the general command. His tactics paid off, and Lingem, Wachtendonk, and Lochem were conquered. Buzanval began to fear greater successes and pressed Henry for more financial assistance. He informed the King of Dutch willingness to co-operate with French ambitions in the Southern Netherlands if France was willing to underwrite fifty percent of the war expenses.⁹⁵ Moreover, Oldenbarnevelt promised to enter into an agreement with Henry,

⁹⁴Rijperman, XII, p. 366.

⁹⁵Van Deventer, III, p. 5 (Buzanval to Villeroy, 3 November 1604).

whereby the Republic would commit itself not to seek a peace with Spain without Henry's advice and permission.

Henry wanted more than that. During an interview with Aerssens in February 1605, the King insisted on an immediate offensive in Flanders "to clear the coast".⁹⁶ Apparently the King wanted to see England and the Arch-dukes separated in case of a combined action by the two. Final agreement on the matter failed again. When Maurice proved he was able to contain Spinola, and when a serious mutiny destroyed the effectiveness of the Spanish forces, the danger for the Republic disappeared and with it its willingness to conclude a far-reaching agreement.

In May Aerssens discussed the war with Sully. The latter admitted that French intentions to establish a protectorate over the Netherlands were unfavorably received by the pro-Spanish factions in France. He suggested a possible marriage between the Spanish Infanta and the Dauphin. In this manner the dowry of the Spanish Netherlands would gradually become official French territory.⁹⁷ Sully did not intend to include the United Republic in this dowry because he inquired for Dutch willingness to accept

⁹⁶"nettoyer la coste marine". Ibid., p. 17 (Aerssens to Oldenbarnevelt, 11 February 1605).

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 42 (Aerssens to Oldenbarnevelt, 29 May 1605).

a sovereignty on the basis of permanent division of the Netherlands. Aerssens stalled and mentioned the possibility of English complications in such settlement.⁹⁸

French contributions decreased in the wake of slow diplomatic progress. To clarify the French position in Europe, as a form of diplomatic blackmail, the Dutch demanded an immediate French declaration of war or one million ecus per year in financial support. A French refusal of both requests presented the irrevocable loss of all investments in the future of the Spanish Netherlands for France. On 17 November Aerssens handed his demands to Henry, who promised to consult his council. A day later, Villeroy posed the central question: if His Majesty will declare war upon Spain "what will you do for him? ... You are silent in your proposals and only consider your advantage in the matter".⁹⁹ The answer was obvious but difficult to express. The precarious years of the 1580's and 90's had passed. The Republic had established a strong military position, the Orient was being opened and continued Anglo-French rivalry brightened the future of the Dutch.

⁹⁸Ibid., p. 52 (Aerssens to Oldenbarnevelt, 12 October 1605).

⁹⁹"que feriez vous pour elle? ... vous este fermes en vos resolutions et ne consideres en vos affaires que vos utilité". Ibid., p. 62 (Aerssens to Oldenbarnevelt, 19 November 1605).

Henry could find comfort and consolation in the knowledge that his Spanish enemy had been too busily engaged against the Republic to present a real danger to his country, but he did not want to surrender his expansionist ambitions. His investments in the Dutch cause had been enormous and positive French gains in the north rather small. Moreover, he was caught on the horns of a dilemma. An open war on Spain might drive England into the Spanish camp, so acceptance as well as rejection of the Dutch demands could cost him dearly. As was his habit, Henry delayed a decision and announced his intentions to send a special ambassador to the Hague. The mission of St. Aubin to Holland heralded a change of emphasis from military to more diplomatic aspects of Franco-Dutch relations.

CHAPTER III

A DIPLOMATIC DILEMMA

The exact objectives of St. Aubin's mission to the Hague are difficult to ascertain because of the absence of detailed records. The apparent secrecy of it, however, gives rise to much speculation, and the importance of the diplomatic move should not be underestimated. Henry was deeply worried about the course of events. He was annoyed that the Dutch had remained aloof during all the years of Anglo-French rivalry in the Netherlands. He was also perturbed by Dutch refusals to allow French merchants into the East Indies and by a diminishing hope of seeing some immediate French expansion into the Spanish Netherlands.

Buzanval reported the arrival of St. Aubin in Holland. He expressed his personal agreement with the delegate's royal instructions. "The essential question to be resolved is not only the survival of the United Provinces but the survival of your own kingdom".¹ To this comment could be added Aerssens' observation that the duty of St. Aubin, besides having a first hand look at the nature of Dutch financial resources, included efforts "to stall the issue which we are pressing".²

¹"de résoudre non de salut seul de ces Provinces Unies, mais de celui mesme de vostre Royaume". Van Deventer, III, p. XIV (Buzanval to Henry, November 1605).

²"pour trainer un peu la resolution que nous pressons". Ibid., p. 65 (Aerssens to Oldenbarevelt, 19 November 1605).

Henry was not in a position to leave the Dutch alone. He was afraid that James I had plans to collaborate with the Spaniards and cause the downfall of the Republic while extending his own influence in the area.³ The King's fear of a possible Anglo-Spanish alliance, however, was not great enough to force him to support the Dutch openly. Already the Archdukes complained bitterly about the great number of Frenchmen who were fighting in Holland, and they offered financial bribes to Henry if he would abandon the Dutch.⁴ A French declaration of war would have evoked retaliation in the form of Spanish aid to the rebellious Duke of Bouillon or of military support to French radical Catholics who had always objected to Henry's aid to the northern protestants. Moreover, Henry's position was complicated even more by his close relations with anti-papal and anti-Habsburg Venice. The King's support of protestants, coupled with a luke-warm attitude towards the papacy could only aggravate the chances of renewed civil strife in France.

It is rather doubtful if Henry really wanted to

³Lettres Missives, VI, p. 540 (Henry to Beaumont, 9 October 1605).

⁴Notations by Cornelius Aerssens after the visit of a Spanish agent to Holland (Cruwel?), Van Deventer, III, p. 108. See also Lettres Missives, VI, p. 495 (Henry to Viscount d'Auchy, 31 July 1605).

support the Republic more than was absolutely necessary even if he had been in a position to do so. Spinola's recent military advances had moved the theatre of war further northwards and had decreased the possibility of early French encroachments in the Spanish Netherlands. For the moment the King wanted a mere continuation of the war to keep the Spaniards occupied.

Henry's vague promises of adequate aid as soon as the Dutch would send a strong army into Flanders did not have much impact in the Republic.⁵ The Dutch realized that they had offended His Most Christian Majesty by refusing to allow a certain Pierre Lintgens to hire sailors and craftsmen in Holland for a proposed French East Indies Company.⁶ Henry's wrath had been expressed by official protests of captures of Spanish vessels by Dutch pirates in French territorial waters.⁷ The emotional fluctuations did not touch essential relationships, however. Dutch dependence on French gold was as great as ever, while Henry needed all help he could find to render Spain harmless to his own country. Franco-Dutch relationships

⁵Van Deventer, III, p. 70 (Oldenbarnevelt to Aerssens, 18 January 1606).

⁶Lettres Missives, VI, p. 430 (Henry to the States-General, 31 May 1605).

⁷Ibid., p. 438 (Henry to Sully, 27 May 1605).

were determined by necessity while each party constantly manoevered for a better position.

Oldenbarnevelt informed the King of a growing desire for peace in Holland. Thus, higher taxes would be very inopportune, and if Henry desired the continuation of the war he should show more concrete evidence of it.⁸

The subtlety of St. Aubin's sudden mission, as well as the surprising lack of the usual correspondence, suggests greater implications in the affair. Perhaps Henry was sufficiently dissatisfied with the independent actions the Dutch had begun to take that he wished a re-evaluation of leadership in the Hague, and St. Aubin's task may have been to ascertain the degree of popular support for Oldenbarnevelt in the Republic. It should not be overlooked that Buzanval's suggestion to give Sluis to France as a cautionary town had found a sympathetic hearing in Paris⁹ and may have triggered the sending of the delegate; Henry would have appreciated an opportunity to check English activities in Flushing, but he knew of the Pensionary's displeasure with the English presence in the Netherlands and he hardly could have expected him to show any enthusiasm for Buzanval's proposal. Thus, a

⁸Van Deventer, III, pp. 69-70 (Oldenbarnevelt to Aerssens, 18 January 1606).

⁹Ibid., xiv (Buzanval to Villeroy, 10 September 1605).

closer examination of the power structure in the Republic could have been advantageous and might have suggested interesting opportunities to put pressures on Oldenbarnevelt. That activities such as these were not foreign to Henry's thought can be shown by Sully's journey to England to judge King James' popular support.¹⁰

Whatever the purpose of St. Aubin's trip may have been, its outcome was not attractive to the Dutch. During the last week of December 1605, Aerssens reported that French financial assistance for the coming year would be decreased by one third.¹¹ Fortunately for the Dutch, however, the Spanish war chest was empty too. The Genoese banking house of Sauli had declared bankruptcy, and on Christmas day Spinola was forced to return to Spain for an effort to arrange new government loans from the fortunes of his own wealthy family.

Undoubtedly, Henry had been aware of the general condition of Spanish finances when he cut his aid to the United Provinces, but the timing of the decisions seems to have been more the result of St. Aubin's report than of a recent knowledge of Sauli's misfortune. It is also very unlikely that the King's decision was influenced by Spinola, who had paid the King a visit on his journey to

¹⁰ Lettres Missives, VI, p. 107 (Henry to Aerssens, 18 January 1606, IIme).

¹¹ Van Deventer, III, p. 69 (Oldenbarnevelt to Aerssens, 18 January 1606).

Spain; the general was too shrewed to let slip such confidential information, and Henry was too suspicious to accept it.

In spite of decreased French assistance, Henry had not abandoned his interests in the advantages the Republic might offer France. A shortage of cash well might result in greater compliance among Dutch leaders to the wishes of the French King. On 7 March 1606 Aerssens arrived in the Hague with a list of questions which the government of France wanted to discuss. Henry's eagerness for a reply revealed that the questions were his. The King wanted to know whether, with the present level of aid, the Dutch would be able to maintain their position, whether there was any inclination to accept a peace and, if so, on what conditions, whether it would not be much better if such a peace would be arrived at by the intervention of France and England so that both Kings could guarantee its observation. If the Dutch chose not to favor peace, he wished to know by what means they expected to maintain their position against Spain, what advantages they were willing to grant France in return for a strong French declaration in favor of the Republic, by what land and naval forces they would assist Henry were he to take part officially in the war, and what type of government would be instituted after His Majesty's declaration of war upon Spain. Would the Dutch allow a free exercise of the Catholic religion in all cities? What were the demands of

Maurice of Nassau and how would they be met? What would the attitude be towards the English troops which were stationed in the cautionary towns? How effectively would Bouillon be forced into the King's obedience and, if the Dutch should offer the sovereignty of the Republic to Henry, what degree of certainty could be given that it would materialize?¹²

Aerssens' list contained more questions, all of which reflected Henry's paternalism towards the Republic. Apparently the King regarded the United Provinces as some form of French protectorate, desperately in need of his support. After the latest reduction of French aid he expected the Dutch to be hard pressed and not to have any real choice in the matter. Thus, he thought that his offer of assistance could be made conditional on compliance to his wishes. The Dutch were astonished by Henry's arrogance. To prevent a full-scale national outcry they kept knowledge of Aerssens' list restricted to top-level government officials, for they realized that further dealings with France would involve their sovereignty as much as the war against Spain did.

As a result of Aerssens' memorandum, Oldenbarnevelt's objections to a negotiated peace with Spain decreased. The general public had discussed freely the

¹²Ibid., pp. 71-73 (Memo of Aerssens, 24 February 1606).

advantages of such a settlement for quite a while, especially since the news of a cut-back in French aid had become common knowledge. Buzanval noticed the changes that were taking place. He reported to Villeroy that "everything among them [the Dutch] wavers to the extent that discussions of an understanding [with Spain] are more frequent here than I should have been able to believe two years ago".¹³

The Dutch avoided a direct confrontation with Henry and refused to give any specific answers to his questions. Instead, they ordered Aerssens to express regrets on behalf of the States-General when the King decided to use force against the Duke of Bouillon.¹⁴ An internally divided France would be welcomed by the common enemy who also would be delighted to see the Dutch Republic isolated.

Henry did not press for any answers from Holland after he had embarked on a military effort to force the rebellious Duke of Bouillon into submission. He realized that further discussions of the issues which Aerssens had brought to the attention of the Dutch government would

¹³"Tout commence a branler parmi eux, de sorte que les discours d'un accord y sont plus frequents que je n'eusse pu croire il y a deux ans". Ibid., p. 69 (Buzanval to Villeroy, 8 March 1606).

¹⁴Rijperman, XIII, p. 607 (resolution of 11 March 1606).

increase the possibilities of renewed war against Spain. He informed the Dutch ambassador that neither the King's services nor the safety of the Republic should suffer "since it was still too early in the season for the matter which I have communicated to you".¹⁵

The general shortage of financial resources caused yet another spring without significant military activities in the Lowlands. Spinola's trip to Spain had been unsuccessful. Although the general had been received with all due honors and respect, neither his eloquence nor the wealth of his private fortunes had been able to sway Philip III into a decision to increase or even maintain the present level of expenditures. The Spanish economic exhaustion made all financial discussions an exercise in futility at the time when Henry was pre-occupied with Bouillon's rebellion and the Dutch felt the sharp pinch of reduced French assistance. Spanish troop concentrations on the southern and northeastern borders of the Republic were limited to little sieges and small cavalry raids while Maurice was forced to emphasize defensive holding operations.

The Dutch navy continued to strangle the Iberian Peninsula. Coastal towns were raided regularly, and

¹⁵"qu'il soit traite plus avant en cette saison sur la matiere que je vous ai communiquee." Van Deventer, III, p. 73 (Aerssens to Oldenbarnevelt, 25 March 1606).

Spanish trans-Atlantic shipping became increasingly more hazardous. Ever greater participation of Dutch private enterprise in the lucrative business of piracy made the blockade increasingly effective. In the East Indies Spain rapidly lost its trade monopoly and forts to intruding Dutch adventurers.

Spinola realized that a final Dutch defeat, if at all attainable, would have to take place on the water. He was supported by Verreycken, a Spanish Netherlander who represented the Archdukes in Madrid, in pleading for the stationing of a strong Spanish navy in the territorial waters of Flanders and Zealand. Verreycken's task was to convince Philip III that the Dutch sources of resistance had to be attacked. "You will inform the King, that a war at sea, if we have the means to wage it, will undoubtedly result in greater damage to the enemy than any damage we can inflict upon him on land, because at sea we will ruin his fishing industry and endanger his shipping".¹⁶

Phillip III's repeated decisions to reduce military spending, as well as his conviction that the primary

¹⁶"Vous direz au Roy, que la guerre par mer, si nous avons de quoy la faire, porteroit sans comparaison plus de dommages à l'ennemy que celle qu'on luy faict par terre, pourceque par la on luy ruinerait la pêcherie et empecheroit la navigation" Ibid., xxi (Instructions to Verreycken, 31 December 1605).

objective of Spanish vessels was the defence of the mother country, upset the military stalemate of the war to the advantage of the Dutch. Spanish mutinies became more frequent and resulted in numerous burnings, sackings, and lootings, especially in Brabant and Liège. More and more the people of the Southern Netherlands desired peace at almost any cost and this desire, combined with Philip's curtailment of military budgets, forced the Archdukes and Spinola to a more conciliatory policy in dealings with the Dutch.

Spanish attacks decreased, and for Henry IV the new situation meant a short breathing space. The Republic did not appear to be in the actual danger its representatives said it was.¹⁷ His unilateral decision to reduce French aid, however, had been offensive to the Dutch, and the Republic adopted a more independent bargaining position towards both France and Spain. Soon it would be the French King who would do the asking.

In spite of the Anglo-Spanish peace of 1604, English aid had continued to flow into the Republic. James I had allowed his former allies to hire troops in England and Scotland, much to the chagrin of the Spaniards. Because of the latter's repeated protests James had granted

¹⁷ Lettres Missives, VI, p. 588 (Henry to the Landgrave of Hesse, 17 March 1606).

the same privilege to the Archdukes in 1605. But the English King continued to refuse naval protection to troops destined to the Spanish Netherlands, and their crossing of the North Sea easily was prevented by the Dutch. English benevolence was based on sound financial interests; James more and more realized the basic weakness of his financial position and would welcome repayment of advances made to the Dutch. Spanish efforts to establish an Anglo-Spanish alliance involved huge amounts of gold since any agreement between the two countries would necessarily mean the end of all English hopes to see any money returned by the Dutch.

In mid-1606 Philip III gave up all hope for an Anglo-Spanish partnership that might achieve a settlement of the Dutch question. James I had insisted that one million ducats was an insufficient reward for English military aid, but fear of a general European conflict that undoubtedly would follow renewed Spanish hegemony in the Lowlands was a more likely reason for his withdrawal, and all discussions of English arms for Spanish gold were stopped by the Gunpowder Plot.¹⁸ The English government interpreted the Archdukes' refusal to hand over some persons accused of having participated in the conspiracy as

¹⁸Winwood Memorials, II, PP. 322-325.

an indication of Spanish involvement in the incident.

With hopes for English assistance gone, Philip III bowed to pressures exerted by the Archdukes and to Spinola's logic and listened to reasons why a military victory over the Dutch was out of the question. He consented that the Archdukes contact the States-General to ascertain the conditions for a possible armistice or peace, and to this purpose Wittenhorst arrived in the Hague in the spring of 1606 and began talks with the Dutch government.

Meanwhile, many prominent citizens in the Republic had discussed the organization of a West Indies company which would streamline the operations of private pirate-merchants. Henry learned of the plans and desired to take part in the scheme. His hunger for the rich spoils of Spanish silver mines in the New World appeared stronger than the memory of a previous rebuttal in regard to the East Indies trade. On behalf of the King, Aerssens invited Vrancken, a member of the Council of State and in charge of the operation, to come to France. "He should be accompanied by an expert and inform the King of the possibilities of the undertaking to be embarked upon". Of course, the whole matter was to be kept secret. It would suffice if Oldenbarnevelt and Maurice were aware of it. Upon due explanation, the King would provide "such amounts as you will deem necessary for the equipment of an expedition that would carry out the mentioned

plans".¹⁹ Vrancken never went to France because internal bickering within the organizing group delayed all decisions, and Henry soon lost interest. However, the Spanish learned of the project, and it aroused new fears and suspicions. More than before Brussels and Madrid wanted peace. They feared the possible damaging effects upon their economies, while rumors of French participation in the venture and a possible strengthening of the Franco-Dutch alliance made the Archdukes and Spinola reluctant to take risks. The latter would accept a preliminary armistice on the basis of sovereignty during which discussions on a final treaty would take place. They hoped that Philip's approval of this temporary recognition would be forthcoming.

Oldenbarnevelt immediately informed the French government of the latest Spanish peace feelers. He wrote Villeroy about it and showed Buzanval Wittenhorst's credentials. French reaction was instant but not as violent as the Pensionary may have expected. Aerssens reported that "rumors of our peace suggestions have worried people" but that the magnitude of French invest-

¹⁹"pour en informer Sa Majesté de la facilité, laquelle s'y pourra embarquer".

"d'une telle somme que jugerons nécessaire a l'équipage et expédition du dit dessein". Van Deventer, III, p. 75 (Aerssens to Vranken, 17 May 1606).

ments in the Dutch cause made them "doubt that we could escape them".²⁰ Villeroy visited the Dutch ambassador and dropped the confidential hint that the Prince of Anhalt was interested in participating in a great new anti-Spanish alliance. This league was to satisfy Dutch demands for aid and cause the continuation of the war. The French councillor also requested, on behalf of his King, that a special Dutch delegation come to France to negotiate the terms of the new alliance. Thus, Oldenbarnevelt's suggestion of the year before was taken up since it was obvious that the Pensionary himself was to be the special delegate.

Buzanval's letter of 9 September had a greater impact. The ambassador had obtained inside information of a special meeting of the States of Holland. Since this province made the largest single contribution to the national budget, Oldenbarnevelt had permitted its delegates, sworn to secrecy by a special oath, to hear a detailed, first-hand explanation of the desperate financial condition of the Republic. So serious was the national emergency that, according to the Pensionary, only two solutions seemed possible: "To put themselves under the

²⁰"l'opinion de votre paix les a alarmée ils doutent que nous leurs pourrions échapper". Ibid., P. 80 (Aerssens to Oldenbarnevelt, 9 August 1606).

protection of a prince who would take the lion's share of the war burden upon his shoulders and continue to fight the King of Spain, or (in case that failed) to try to find some form of settlement ["with the enemy"]".²¹ Buzanval went on to say that in Oldenbarnevelt's opinion only Henry of Bourbon qualified as such a prince. He observed that as yet the Dutch had not shown any particular interest in this type of protection while apparently Henry had no special desire to increase his aid because of "the little profit he had drawn from it".²²

In the same letter the French ambassador claimed that the Spanish King and the Archdukes had "renounced all rights and claims on Holland and Zealand and were willing to declare the provinces independent and freed from all laws except their own".²³ The statement must have been made up on the basis of false information as the course of events, as well as Wittenhorst's letter of 27 January 1607, contradicted the existence of any definite

²¹"une de se mettre sous la protection de quelque Prince, qui vouldut prendre la meilleure partie de ce fardeau sur ces épaules, et faire la guerre au Roy d'Espagne, ou bien (cela manquant) de prendre le chemin de quelque accord". Ibid., p. 84 (Buzanval to Villeroy, 9 September 1606).

²²"le peu de profit qu'il en avoit tiré en son particulier". Ibid.

²³"renonceront aux droits et pretentions qu'ils ont sur la Hollande et Zelande, les declarant libres et franches de toutes autres lois que des leurs propres". Ibid., p. 85.

plans.²⁴ Perhaps Buzanval interpreted Spinola's acceptance of a temporary Dutch independence as a firm commitment for future Spanish views. In defence of the ambassador's remarks it could be argued, however, that Phillip III had a habit of changing his mind, though this time the desire for peace was too general and too sincere to make likely a risk of jeopardizing the talks with contradictory proposals. In any case, the French representative's knowledge of what occurred in the meeting of the States of Holland is to be admired. It is evidence of the great amount of information that reached Paris and prevented Henry from being caught unaware.

Buzanval's information as well as his prognosis of the Dutch situation resulted in renewed French offers of aid, provided Henry's interests were taken care of. On 10 October 1606 the French ambassador was authorized to renew some old Dutch proposals, and during an interview with Oldenbarnevelt he revived the original 1598 invasion plan of the Spanish Netherlands.²⁵ Two French armies were to attack the Spanish forces at Namur and along the coasts while a large Dutch contingent was to break through from the north. All that Henry IV wanted was a "reiteration of the same offers that had been made to the previous king of France, who had not deserved so well of them [the

²⁴See p. 94.

²⁵See p. 29.

Dutch⁷ as himself".²⁶ This referred to the Dutch offer of sovereignty over the revellious provinces made to Henry III in 1584.²⁷

Oldenbarnevelt explained that times had changed, that the situation of 1606 was different from that of 1584, and that he had good reasons to believe that the States-General "wanted to maintain their freedom and rights".²⁸ But apparently the Pensionary did not reject the French demands in a very forceful fashion. Buzanval thought he noticed in Oldenbarnevelt a lesser degree of personal identification with the Dutch cause. He wrote, "Oldenbarnevelt considers himself to be at the end of his work: he is rich but weary, and feels it will be relieving to put his fortune into safety".²⁹

²⁶"de reiterer les memes offres qui l'on avait jadis faites au precedent Roy de France, qui n'avoit si bien merite d'eux comme luy". Van Deventer, III, p. 95 (Buzanval to Villeroy, 11 October 1606).

²⁷Geyl, Geschiedenis der Nederlandse Stam, II, p. 397.

²⁸"maer hare vryheyt en rechten wilden behouden". Van Deventer, III, p. 95 (Notations of Oldenbarnevelt following his discussions with Buzanval, 10 October 1606).

²⁹"M. d'Oldenbarneveld se voit au bout de son latin; il est riche, mais las, et croys qu'il serait bien aise de mettre sa fortune en surete". Ibid., p. 96 (Buzanval to Villeroy, 11 October 1606).

Perhaps the ambassador was aware of Richardot's suggestion to bribe Oldenbarnevelt, a proposal made to Wittenhorst earlier in the year.³⁰ Since the Frenchman was too intelligent to attach any significance to these well-known Spanish tactics, however, it is more likely that the Pensionary made an effort to remain non-committal for the time being. Further evidence for this view can be found in the Dutch leader's instructions to his representative in Paris two days after the meeting with Buzanval. Aerssens was ordered to continue pressing for aid. "If, by the month of December, we could be assured that next year we will receive twice this year's amount, one third of it in December or January, one third in April or May, and one third in September or October, I would not doubt that with the help of God, the course of events may be changed".³¹

Thus, the Pensionary had not abandoned all hopes of a continuation of the war. If Henry would commit himself without the rigid demand for some form of sovereignty, a Franco-Dutch effort would be welcomed. Oldenbarnevelt seemed to feel greater security in the company of a some-

³⁰ Ibid., xxiii.

³¹ "Indien wy in de maent van December, voor het toekomende jaer, tytelyck konden verzeekert zyn van een dubbelt van dit jaer, één derde in Septembri of Octobri, één derde in Aprili of Maio en één derde in Septembri of Octobri, ick soude nyet twyffelen of met Godts hulpe soude de cours geheel verandert worden". Ibid., p. 98 (Oldenbarnevelt to Aerssens, 12 October 1606).

what paternalistic Henry than in negotiations with a Spain full of intrigue. Suspicions of possible Spanish double dealing were very real in Holland, and many people were convinced that a treaty with the enemy would last only so long as it served the interests of the Habsburgs. An important Dutch official offered the opinion that Spain continually would "try to corrupt our government as soon as we will have isolated ourselves from our friends, so that they [the Spaniards] will have made their gains before we have decided what to do because we have to involve so many people".³²

The months of October and November of 1606 appear to have been crucial to the course of events in western Europe. The Dutch decision to refuse to surrender the sovereignty of the Republic to France removed Henry's strongest motive for war, so Aerssens' warnings that "it is essential for you [the States-General] to conform [to French desires] if you want to receive any substantial aid from here" went unheeded.³³ The thought that Henry would

³²"ende de Regeringe ondertusschen soeken te corromperen, ende d'oorloge beginnen als wy van onse vrienden op dien voet sullen gescheyden zyn; achtende dat sy haer voordeel sullen gedaen hebben, aler nyeuwe correspondentie gemaect ofte resolutie in onse sake genomen sal syn, die met veel luyden hebben te doen". *Ibid.*, p. 109 (Advice by Cornelius Aerssens, February 1607).

³³"il est nécessaire que vous y conformiez, si desirez obtenir une notable assistance d'icy". *Ibid.*, p. 99 (Aerssens to Oldenbarnevelt, 14 November 1606).

"undertake a war anew, which should have no other object but the settlement of a third Party", was dismissed readily by English observers as "a work of too great difficulty to be compassed now, unless it might bring with it some access of power to his Kingdom, in one kind or another".³⁴

Oldenbarnevelt had become convinced of the desperation of the military stalemate. However, he could not afford to abandon Henry until he had concluded a firm agreement with the enemy, and at the same time he had to maintain the possibility of a new Franco-Dutch alliance as a means to pressure Spain into an acceptable agreement. Thus, by the end of 1606, Dutch policy had crystallized. The official aim was to achieve a negotiated settlement with the enemy by using the military potential of the French King.

Wittenhorst's mission to Holland had not met with complete success, but it had made some important gains in Spanish eyes. For the first time since the beginning of the conflict the Dutch had not rejected immediately the possibility of a negotiated agreement, only insisting on some solid rules as a sound basis for bargaining. Buzanval's error in claiming that a Spanish offer of independence for Holland and Zealand had been made³⁵ was contradicted by a letter from Wittenhorst to the government in Brussels at

³⁴ Winwood Memorials, II, p. 298.

³⁵ See p. 84.

the beginning of 1607. The delegate asked for new policies to be formulated and for broader instructions since the Dutch did not want to listen or talk on the basis of authorized concessions.³⁶ They wanted complete independence from the beginning and it was unlikely that they would negotiate on a basis that contained anything less than that.

A few days later Wittenhorst returned home. His reports to the Archdukes and Spinola must have had a great impact, for shortly afterwards a willingness emerged to negotiate on the basis of a status quo as was indicated by Wittenhorst's letter to the States-General. "It is understood", he wrote, "that to go ahead with the armistice means that everything has to remain as is, without bringing in any pretensions".³⁷

Further Spanish contacts began to follow each other in rapid succession. Werner Cruwel, a Flemish merchant, obtained an interview with Oldenbarnevelt and presented some preliminary position papers which had been signed by Spinola and Father Neyen, a high ranking official in the Cordelier Order. No mention of any conditio sine

³⁶"de laquelle ils ne veulent ouir parler icy". Van Deventer, III, p. 103 (Wittenhorst to the Brussels's government, 15 January 1607).

³⁷"Il s'entend, prenant le chemin de Trèfve, tout demeure au mesme etat comme il se trouve, sans y entremesler pretention aucune". Ibid., p. 104 (Wittenhorst to the States-General, 14 February 1607).

qua non was made. Spinola only expressed the hope that the Dutch would be willing to terminate their East Indies trade.³⁸

Henry IV began to feel uneasy about the progress towards a Habsburg-Dutch agreement. Rumors trickled to France, and the King sensed that an understanding had become a distinct possibility. Again he sent Aerssens to the States-General to present a list of questions to the Dutch government. The nature of the information required was not unlike that of the previous year. Aerssens declared that Henry and Villeroy were in incomplete agreement with all parts of the questions but that "they had neither wanted to write them down nor sign them, in order not to give anything to us which, in case of lack of results, might be used to incriminate them in Spanish eyes".³⁹

This time Henry wanted a declaration of the membership of the States-General "which obliged them never to sign a peace, armistice or any other agreement with any Prince, without the intervention and consent of His Majesty".⁴⁰ He also repeated the argument that the Dutch should decide on the protection of a prince and renewed his offers of

³⁸Ibid., p. 106 (Declaration of Spinola, February 1607).

³⁹"Ils ne les ont voulu ni escrire eus mesmes, ni signer, afin de nous mettre rien en mains qui, en cas de mauvais succes, leur eust pu estre imputé par l'Espagnol". Ibid., p. 101 (Memo of Aerssens, February 1607).

⁴⁰"portant obligation de ne faire jamais paix, trêve, ni aultre convention quelconque, avecq quelque prince que ce soit, sans l'intervention et consentement de Sa Mat" Ibid.

conditional aid.

Again the Dutch hesitated and refused to give a clear answer to Henry, and Aerssens informed the English ambassador in the Hague of the King's intentions in the Netherlands.⁴¹ The French monarch was angered by the breach of diplomatic confidence, but it seems likely that the talkative ambassador had the blessings of the Pensionary for this scheme; the timing of the French suggestions was too advantageous not to take profit from it. Oldenbarnevelt must have understood that publicizing Henry's offer would help to force the Habsburgs to come to terms.

The intuition of the Pensionary was correct. Wittenhorst's task was taken over completely by the skillful Father Neyen, and the Franciscan monk traveled back and forth between Brussels and the Hague in search of an agreement. On 22 March he declared his readiness for a preliminary armistice, which was signed officially on 11 April 1607.⁴²

The secrecy surrounding the actual negotiations had been preserved so carefully that news of its success caught political circles by surprise everywhere. "I found His Majesty very much surprised at first", wrote Caron after he had informed James I of the event. The

⁴¹Winwood Memorials, II, p. 298.

⁴²Van Deventer, III, p. 113 (Neyen to Oldenbarnevelt, 22 March 1607).

English King gave the Dutch ambassador so much of his time that Lord Salisbury was astonished.⁴³ Hendrick van Bilderdeke, the Dutch agent in Cologne, expressed disbelief at the Archduke's acceptance of the United Provinces "as a free nation and a republic".⁴⁴ And the French were angered because they felt that Oldenbarnevelt had outmanoevered them. They always had considered Dutch talk of a possible armistice a device to obtain more aid, but as Sailly, the Dutch agent in Calais, noted "at the moment they have good reasons to be afraid".⁴⁵ Aerssens, who had been sent back to Paris, reported that his reception was cold. The King was dissatisfied "with the method of the members of the States-General, to have discussed matters and to have dealt with the enemy without delay, without asking advice".⁴⁶ The ambassador assured Henry that the Dutch certainly would respect and recognize any opinion of the King, but the disillusioned monarch saw through this and answered: "You

⁴³"S. M. in 't eynde in een soo goet humeur gebrocht was" Ibid., p. 116 (Caron to Oldenbarnevelt, 2 April 1607).

⁴⁴"voor een vryen staet en republicq". Ibid., p. 118 (Bilderdeke to Oldenbarnevelt, 10 April 1607).

⁴⁵"à present ils en ont la peur a bon escient". Ibid., p. 119 (Sailly to Oldenbarnevelt, 12 April 1607).

⁴⁶"de la procedure de Messeigneurs les Etats, d'avoir confere ou traicte sy avant avecq leurs ennemis, sans en attendre, moins luy demander son advis". Ibid., p. 121 (Aerssens to Oldenbarnevelt, 14 April 1607).

tell me one thing and do the other; I will consider what you have said and will discuss it with my council".⁴⁷

Two days later Aerssens was informed of Henry's intentions to send Jeannin to the Hague with very broad instructions. "If you want peace ... to make sure that it will not be disadvantageous to you; if you want to continue the war, to offer and assure you of such amount of aid that it will satisfy you; on condition, however, that you will grant him [Jeannin] the role which I have assigned to him".⁴⁸

Thus Henry made a final effort to stave off a Spanish-Dutch agreement when the preliminary armistice should have expired after eight months. He still felt confident that his influence in Holland was strong enough to impose his will, and he had neither given up hope that the Dutch would be used to further French interests nor realized fully the practical necessity of peace.⁴⁹

English surprise was followed by political uncertainty. In a letter to Ralph Winwood, the English am-

⁴⁷"vous dites l'un, et faictes l'autres; je penseroy sur ce que m'avez dict et en communiqueray avec mon conseil". Ibid.

⁴⁸"si desirez la paix, pour vous tesmoigner qu'elle ne desire nullement procurer votre perte, sy la continuation de la guerre, vous offrir et asseurer un tel secours qu'aurez subject de vous en contenter, a condition neanmoins que luy accordiez l'acte dont j'ay eu la charge". Ibid.

⁴⁹Sully, VI, p. 59 (Villeroy to Sully, 27 April 1607).

bassador in the Hague, Cecil noted that "for as much as concerned his Majesty's Intentions, whether to second the States in this Peace, or to dissuade them from it, his Majesty would suspend his Resolution until he had heard the States Deputies".⁵⁰ James I was as much involved in a termination of hostilities in the Netherlands as the French King. The balance of power would be disturbed and when two Dutch representatives requested the Stuart King to send two commissioners to the Republic to join with the French in a common search for an acceptable settlement James was quick to accept the invitation. Richard Spencer and Ralph Winwood were appointed to maintain English influence in the Low Countries and to make sure that the new treaty would not disturb the equilibrium of the balance of power.

Two great leaders, Spinola and Oldenbarnevelt, understood the futility of prolonging a conflict in which no clear military victory was possible for either side. That both had accepted this fact testifies to their political wisdom, while their simultaneous arrival at this conclusion was fortunate for their careers. Both incurred royal wrath; the former had the difficult task of convincing Philip III of the realities of the situation while the

⁵⁰Winwood Memorials, II, p. 306.

latter had to contend with Henry IV of France. Fortunately, they were joined by an equally great French diplomat, Pierre Jeannin. After a thorough study of the complex situation Jeannin would join forces with the other two main participants, and his conciliatory influence and moderate counsel would bring about the final success of the negotiations. The diplomatic glory of the final settlement became the compensation for Henry IV's failure to extend the French frontier northwards.

CHAPTER IV

NEW PERSPECTIVES

Henry IV's selection of Pierre Jeannin as his special delegate to the Hague during the confusing years of Spanish-Dutch negotiations was symptomatic of the great importance the King attached to the political consequences of a possible agreement to cease hostilities. Jeannin belonged to the small circle of Henry's intimate advisors and was known as "a moderate and a member of the anti-Spanish faction".¹ His background as president of the Burgundian parlement and as Mayenne's chief negotiator vis à vis Henry not only had provided him with a thorough training in the difficult art of diplomacy, but his position as a former ligueur also had brought him into direct contact with the intrigues of Spanish politics. Since the end of the Ligue rebellion Jeannin had given Henry loyal service and in recognition of his superior intelligence the King entrusted him with this diplomatic assignment. The complex nature of the mission undoubtedly would require all the talents of this master diplomat. The appointment of such a high ranking official, however, illustrated Henry's conviction that the Spanish-Dutch controversy was essentially only a part of the general Franco-Spanish conflict.

¹Raymond F. Kierstead, Pomponne de Bellievre (Northwestern University Press, 1968), p. 91.

Jeannin commenced his mission in the wake of a rising tide of anti-French suspicion among the Dutch because of the persistent rumors that Henry planned to establish a protectorate over the Republic, and he was confronted by widely divergent views held by various pressure groups within the Republic. His tasks included efforts to unite these opinions behind a common cause, to influence the Dutch to overhaul their system of government, to maintain French diplomatic prominence in the Hague and above all to remain in control of all negotiations.² His diplomatic instructions had been vague and needed constant clarification as the political climate and power structure in Holland became better understood. Moreover, Jeannin realized that the Hague Congress had to serve the interests and honor of his King. On 27 June 1607 he wrote: "The King is on stage; everyone sees that he is involved in this activity; thus it is necessary that honor should remain his whatever the cost may be, and that shame and harm should befall those who plan to obstruct him in this good work".³

²"vous devez vous rendre maitres et conducteurs principaux de toute la negociation". Negociations, XII, p. 124 (Villeroy to Jeannin and Buzanval, 17 June 1607).

³"Le Roi est sur le théâtre; chacun voit qu'il est entremis en cette action; ainsi il faut que l'honneur lui en demeure à quelque prix que ce soit, et que la honte et le dommage tombe sur ceux qui le voudront traverser en ce bon oeuvre". Ibid., p. 164 (Jeannin to Villeroy, 7 June 1607).

The successes of the ambassador should not be underestimated. Jeannin won recognition as a compromiser and achieved, at least temporarily, support for a common course of action in the Republic. The English diplomats recognized the primary position of their French counterparts,⁴ while the successful conclusion of the Spanish-Dutch negotiations raised the prestige of the French King. It was mainly in reference to Jeannin that Oldenbarnevelt remarked in his personal notes about the foreign diplomats that "although they had been sent here to assist the States-General ... [they] wished to be mediators to bring the affair ... to a good conclusion".⁵

The announcement that preliminary negotiations between the Spaniards and the Dutch had taken place had come as a surprise to Henry. Although his instructions for the French delegates had been prepared with care, he had not actually specified whether he preferred the continuation of the war to peace. The King rejected the accusation that he planned to extend his sovereignty over the Republic. Rumors to this effect were based on "falsehood

⁴Ibid., pp. 375-402 (Jeannin to Henry, 24 September 1607).

⁵"hoewel sy alhier gesonden waren om de Heeren Staaten te assisteren ... [zij] begeerden mediateurs te wesen om de saecke ... ten goeden eynde te brengen". Van Deventer, III, p. 225 (Notations by Oldenbarnvelt on the discussions between Spanish and Dutch representatives on the subject of a peace or truce, 9 September 1608).

and maliciousness for which the King had good reason to be so indignant and angry".⁶ He had sent Aerssens to the Hague to obtain adequate answers to three questions: Could the Dutch maintain themselves with the present level of aid? In case they were inclined to peace, what could the French King do to facilitate its realization? What assistance would the Dutch provide France if Henry declared war on Spain?⁷ Henry complained that he had never received an answer and accused the Dutch of having acted in bad faith.

It is difficult to ascertain Henry's true intentions. The Dutch bothered Henry, but he did not have any effective means to control them.

Complaints about excesses and thefts the Dutch commit against my subjects and about the lack of justice done to them by the pursuits of the latter, reach me so frequently that ultimately I will be forced to satisfy the just demands of my mentioned subjects and recover their possessions by means of retaliation.⁸

⁶"qui est une fauseté et malice dont sadite majeste a bon droit si indignée et emué". Negociations, XIII, p. 468 (Instructions to Jeannin and Buzanval).

⁷Ibid., p. 472.

⁸"Les plaintes me viennent si frequentes des excez et voleries que les Hollandois commettent sur mes subjects, et du peu de justice qu'on leur rend à la poursuite qu'ils en font par delà, que je serais contrainct a la fin de satisfaire aux justes demandes de mes dicts subjects pour le recouvrement de leur bien et y pourveoir par les voyes de represailles". Lettres Missives, VIII, p. 3 (Henry to Aerssens, 24 September 1606).

The above remarks had been made to Aerssens and were then conveniently dropped. The King continued to support the anti-Spanish cause and agreed, in spite of all accusations of double dealings and injustices inflicted, to extend the same amount of aid for 1607 as he had granted the year before.⁹

Henry was not in a position to allow the Dutch to withdraw from a French sphere to influence, for the attitude of the English government was too uncertain. Noel de Caron, the Dutch agent in London, had been elevated to the rank of ambassador; James I had agreed to the closing of the Scheldt to all English vessels; and the actual military presence of the English in the cautionary towns gave the King of England a strong position at any bargaining table.¹⁰ An Anglo-Spanish alliance was unlikely, but a growing British-Dutch co-operation had to be avoided.

French proposals for a French-English-Dutch military alliance had not been received with much enthusiasm by the English, and Henry had to rely more heavily on Dutch benevolence. Jeannin thought the proposal valuable, however, as a vehicle to force the English representatives into a clarification of their positions. "They will be forced to

⁹Negociations, XII, p. 339 (Henry to Jeannin, 29 August 1607).

¹⁰P. J. Blok, Geschiedenis van het Nederlandsche Volk, III, p. 499.

join it, or if they refuse, to make a lack of good intentions known, that they have come to assist in making peace and to please the Archdukes, and not to help the States".¹¹

Although Henry at no time was willing to increase his aid to the Dutch without deriving some immediate benefits from it,¹² he was rather uncertain as to the exact nature of French objectives in the Republic. The revival of Franco-Dutch friendship was of paramount importance, but for the rest "We... do not want to spend our money on uncertain and doubtful bases".¹³ Until Jeannin had been able to ascertain the true nature of Dutch intentions, Henry would limit his advice to some more general matters. He urged the ambassador of the Archdukes in Paris to withdraw all foreign troops from the Southern Netherlands and to limit the military presence to some fortresses.¹⁴

¹¹"Ils seront contraints d'y entrer, ou le refusant, faire connoître qu'ils n'ont pas bonne intention, et qu'ils sont venus pour aider à faire la paix, et en avoir le gre des archiducs, non pour aider à assister les Etats". Negociations, XII, p. 400 (Jeannin and Russy to Henry, 24 September 1607).

¹²"Sa Majeste n'entend continuer son secours... sans en tirer quelque fruit". Ibid., XI, pp. 498-499 (Second letter of instructions to Jeannin, 16 August 1608).

¹³"Nous ... ne voulant debourser notre argent sur des fondemens incertains et douteux". Ibid., XIII, p. 9 (Villeroy to Jeannin, 14 May 1607).

¹⁴"retirer du pays les étrangers qui estoient en campagne de part et d'autre, reservant seulement celles des citadelles qui n'etoient en grand nombre". Ibid., p. 8 (Villeroy to Jeannin, 7 May 1607).

It did not take Jeannin long to recognize Oldenbarnevelt's strong leadership in the Republic in spite of all rumors that circulated against the Pensionary. In his opinion Oldenbarnevelt felt

that the goodwill and assistance of your Majesty is more necessary and of greater use to this State than anything else; therefore one should try to yield and accomodate oneself in all his orders and wishes; he among all his people is the most trustworthy, the most capable of good advice, even in the plans your Majesty has chosen and with which he is in agreement, eagerly desiring peace provided it will come about with an appropriate degree of security, for the good of his country; that is what he works for, and not to please the Archduke or the Spaniards.¹⁵

Jeannin's decision to support the Pensionary's views and to search for an honorable peace with Spain was an important milestone in the further development of the many-sided negotiations. If Henry could be convinced of the good intentions of the Pensionary, the whole prestige of the French diplomatic presence could be used to unify Dutch thinking behind a quest for peace, but the French

¹⁵"que la bienveillance et assistance de votre Majeste est plus necessaire et utile a cet Etat que toute autre chose; par ainsi qu'on se doit plier et accomoder du tout a ces commandemens et volentes; et il est celui entre tous ces peuples qui a le plus de creance et est le plus capable de les bien conseiller, meme au dessein que votre Majeste a pris, lequel est conforme a son inclination, lui desirant la paix avec ardeur, pourvu que ce soit avec la surete qu'il convient, et pour le bien de son pays, a quoi il tend, non a gratifier l'archiduc et l'Espagnol". Ibid., p. 133 (Jeannin to Henry, 20 June 1607).

King was suspicious. He had witnessed Oldenbarnevelt's performance in 1598 when the Peace of Vervins had resulted in a stronger Anglo-Dutch partnership. He was hurt when Aerssens, with the Pensionary's approval, had informed Winwood of French schemes to establish a protectorate over the Republic, while the unilateral Dutch decision to commence negotiations with the enemy had increased his suspicions. Henry repeated his growing distrust of the leadership in the Republic and doubted the validity of Jeannin's observations. Villeroy revealed the King's thoughts and wrote

The King challenges Oldenbarnevelt's ideas more than those of the other one /Prince Maurice who opposed a negotiated settlement with Spain/ and believes that if he /Oldenbarnevelt/ attains his goal, he will afterwards neither favor the intentions nor the interests of France but will lean to the English side. He begs you to be on your guard and not to judge all his /Oldenbarnevelt's/ courage by his words.¹⁶

But gradually Henry wavered in his position. He did not want to antagonize Oldenbarnevelt; he simply could not afford to do so in the light of the international situation. He feared the Pensionary's superior ability and

¹⁶"Le Roi se defie plus d'esprit de Barneveldt que de l'autre, et croit que s'il parvient à son but, qu'il ne favorisera après les intentions ni les affaires de la France, s'appuyant du côté d'Angleterre. Il vous prie d'y prendre garde, et ne juger du tout de son courage par ses paroles". Ibid., p. 269 (Villeroy to Jeannin, 5 August 1607).

admitted that the latter "always takes the right road to reach his goal".¹⁷ Thus, the King suggested a military alliance between France and the Republic. The new treaty would become effective before any agreement between the Republic and Spain was signed. As an official ally Henry would be able to influence and check the conditions of a negotiated settlement with Spain and avoid undesirable consequences for France. At the same time the Dutch would be prevented from forming too strong a friendship with England, while Dutch agreement to a treaty would demonstrate friendly intentions towards France.

Oldenbarnevelt accepted the proposal which greatly strengthened his hand in his dealings with Spain. He promised Jeannin to act towards the States-General as if the whole idea were his own. During the same interview with Oldenbarnevelt the French delegate had also brought up the matter of Henry's suspicions towards the Republic. The Pensionary had been very understanding. "He has cleared up all those suspicions by using the same reasons which we have often brought to your attention; he has assured us of his friendship and of the good intentions of

¹⁷"va toujours gagnant chemin pour arriver à son but". Ibid., p. 270 (Villeroy to Jeannin, 5 August 1607).

the States".¹⁸

Jeannin's proposal of a new military alliance with France had brought an added bonus to Oldenbarnevelt. The possible agreement with Spain, which was being negotiated, would no longer remain a largely national affair but would become an allied settlement. Thus, Oldenbarnevelt's position vis à vis the individual provinces would be strengthened greatly. He needed this extra support because of a growing vocal opposition against any dealings with Spain whatsoever. Maurice of Nassau was afraid that his personal prestige and influence would decline in a Republic at peace, and he warned against "internal disturbances and disorderly conduct among the numerous soldiers who would be unemployed".¹⁹ Merchants, especially in Zeeland where piracy was an important source of income, were worried about the possible decline of trade. And increasingly bitter religious quarrels threatened to destroy Dutch unity and undermine Oldenbarnevelt's position.

Opposition to the strict views of Calvinism had increased rapidly in the Republic. Arminius had been appointed professor of theology at the University of Leyden

¹⁸"Il a purge tous ces soupçons par les memes raisons dont nous avons souvent donné avis à votre Majesté; nous assure de son affection et de la bonne intention des Etats". Ibid., p. 292 (Jeannin to Henry, 17 August 1607).

¹⁹Blok, III, p. 514.

in 1603. It appeared to the stricter elements of the Calvinist community that the magistracy by appointing a liberal thinker to a leading university position was endangering the soundness of doctrine of the Dutch Church, and perhaps even working towards an accomodation with Catholicism. Although the Gomarists misinterpreted the intentions of the magistrates, who had never intended a reconciliation with Rome, the whole controversy of war and peace became a religious issue to many believers, and Gomarus and his followers did not hesitate to raise the cry of popery.²⁰

The States-General had granted permission to the Orthodox faction to organize a national synod in 1606 to redraft the tenets of Reformed doctrine and church discipline. Disturbances which broke out in connection with the orthodox-libertine conflict, however, made the States-General postpone the synod, and in 1608 it was cancelled.²¹ The handling of the affair increased suspicions towards the government in the eyes of religious fanatics, and more evidence of the godless nature of government policies was seen in Oldenbarnevelt's acceptance of a personal gift from Henry IV.²² Jeannin's influence and prestige were

²⁰ Pieter Geyl, The Revolt of the Netherlands, (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1958), p. 289.

²¹ Blok, III, pp. 514-516.

²² Geyl, Geschiedenis der Nederlandse Stam, II, p. 398.

great enough to stem the influence of religious fanatics in 1607, but the next decade would witness the true extent and depth of the controversy. The very foundations of the Republic would totter when the issue became the battle cry for civil war, and the Pensionary himself would become the chief victim.

The religious question within the Republic was accompanied by a personal and political one. The union of Utrecht had been organized mainly as a military alliance, and this constitution did not contain adequate provisions for effective government in peace time. So long as the war lasted the Orange dynasty received recognition in the military, while daily routine matters of government were in hands of various committees with the Pensionary as the chief executive. In 1584, after the assassinations of William of Orange, Oldenbarnevelt had promoted actively the elevation of Maurice to his father's position, and though the effort had failed, at first the military commander and the pensionary were assured of each other's greatest confidence. Since the expedition to Nieuwpoort in July 1600, however, their relationship had cooled a little. Perhaps Maurice objected to the presence of Oldenbarnevelt on the battlefield, while the latter may have assumed that the military should be subjected to the policies of the States-General. Whatever the case, Oldenbarnevelt's position towards Maurice had changed, and when Guelders and Zealand had suggested the elevation of the Stadholder to greater political

authority in 1602 and 1603, the Pensionary had been evasive.²³ In 1607 Oldenbarnevelt proposed the establishment of a committee to rewrite the constitution. Objections by six provinces defeated this idea, while Zealands's suggestion to offer the sovereignty of the Republic to Maurice was rejected by the Pensionary.²⁴

Thus, the advent of serious negotiations with the enemy was marred by discord and disunity within the United Provinces. Pirates and traders were in favor of continuing the war because of its lucrative possibilities, and they found support for their stand in the military headquarters of the Stadholder. Gradually the conflict became polarized around Maurice and Oldenbarnevelt, while the growing animosity between the two leaders reduced the chance for a lasting compromise in the matter. The Stadholder began to support the orthodox side in the religious controversy and counterbalanced the moral support Oldenbarnevelt had thrown to the libertine side. In the eyes of the simple believer Maurice had become the champion of the true religion, and his opposition to a compromise with Spain found support in the lower strata of the population.

Soon after his arrival in Holland Jeannin had decided to support Oldenbarnevelt as the leader of the strongest faction within the Republic. However, Henry remained

²³Van Houtte, V, p. 322.

²⁴Ibid.

reluctant. Again and again Jeannin tried to convince his King of the correctness of his early judgement. A full year later he still wrote: "I keep on telling you that this is true, that at least eighty percent have this opinion [to stop the war] and six of the seven provinces".²⁵ He urged the King not to overestimate the Stadholder's opposition since all his talk "only shows his lack of power".²⁶ The same day Jeannin wrote that everyone in Holland who favored the continuation of the war fully realized that it could not be done without extensive foreign aid. No king would ever grant this amount of assistance as long as the Dutch cause was not his own. He noted that Maurice had moderated greatly his requests for aid but that everyone was aware that there was little hope that those to whom they had addressed themselves would satisfy their demands.²⁷ Perhaps Henry was slightly traditional in expressing a preference for Maurice. Republican governments and the elective quality of their officials may have inspired him to assume a lower degree of stability in a nation's policies.

²⁵"Je continue à vous dire qu'il est vrai, et que de cent les quatrevingts pour le moins sont de cet avis et de sept Provinces les six". Negotiations, XIII, p. 456 (Jeannin to Villeroy, 14 May 1608).

²⁶"elle ne sert qu'a montrer son impuissance". Ibid., p, 459 (Jeannin to Villeroy, 14 May 1608).

²⁷Ibid., p, 449 (Jeannin to Henry, 14 May 1608).

The eight months' truce of May 1607 had not been followed up by concrete Spanish proposals. Phillip III refused to grant his negotiators the required authorities, and one can only speculate about the reasons for this attitude. Undoubtedly the Spaniards were aware of the growing internal dissatisfaction in the Republic. A series of subtle delays might be an effective psychological weapon to undermine Oldenbarnevelt's position and allow time for the protest movement to pick up momentum. A Dutch civil war would then be followed by a final military attack and a Spanish victory.

Delaying negotiations vis à vis the Dutch might also have other advantages. Spanish diplomats would gain time and opportunity to work on Henry IV. Since a Dutch collapse would leave the French King frustrated in his northward ambitions, he might be persuaded to accept some immediate gains in the Spanish Netherlands in return for abandoning his unstable allies. During September 1607 Henry promised Father Neyen to obtain greater freedom for Dutch Roman Catholics.²⁸ He would instruct Jeannin to deal with the Republic in this respect "as if it were an action of the King, his master, himself and as if no prior com-

²⁸ Ibid., XII, p. 501 (Jeannin to Villeroy, 6 November 1607).

munication with your Highness exists".²⁹ Other suggestions were offered, but it is difficult to ascertain at what time specific proposals were made and to what degree Henry was interested in them. Peckius, the ambassador of the Archdukes in France, wrote:

We do our best to make his [Henry's] ministers think it advisable that in case he [Henry] abandons the mentioned States he will adopt the line of a marriage between the second Son of Spain and one of his [Henry's] daughters on conditions already negotiated; that is to lead them [the Dutch] as far as they can be led to a position of reason, fairness and justice in matters of religion and the Indies navigation, without which he is agreeable to abandon the sovereignty of the mentioned Provinces.³⁰

Henry's commitment was there, although the proposals were vague and open to many different interpretations. Villeroy stated that in case the Dutch would not agree, Henry would abandon them as "they would be left unworthy of his continued favor and assistance".³¹ The letter by

²⁹"pour en traiter avec les Etats comme du mouvement propre du Roi son maistre, et comme sans communication préalable avec Vostre Altesse". Van Deventer, III, xli (Peckius to Archduke Albert, 16 January 1608).

³⁰"et tachons de faire trouver bon à ses dits ministres qu'en ce cas il abandonne les dits Estats, et empoigne le party du mariage du second fils d'Espagne avecq l'une de ses filles, aux conditions ja proposées; pour a quoy les induire, sert de beaucoup de les avoir mene jusques là, qu'ils confessent y avoir de la raison, equité et justice en conditions concernans la religion et la navigation aux Indes, soubs lesquelles l'on est content de quicyer la souveraineté des dites Provinces". Ibid., p. 251, (Peckius to the Archduke, 18 August 1608). Actually there was talk of a double marriage as is indicated in Negotiations, XIV, p. 122 (Villeroy to Jeannin, 8 June 1608).

³¹"ils se seront rendus indignées de la continuation de sa faveur et assistance". Ibid.

Peckius quoted above was written in August 1608, but a reference to some Franco-Spanish dealings had been made by the same ambassador as early as January: "The consideration of the good effects such alliance could produce ... had made him [Henry] speak quite openly".³²

All in all, the Spaniards did not make much diplomatic progress in France, for Henry's only concession, his offer to mediate the plight of Dutch Roman Catholics, was in complete harmony with his own religious convictions and policies. His goodwill in the matter advanced Spanish-Dutch negotiations, however, for the Spanish delegates dropped the issue as a planned point of departure for the discussions and agreed to shelve it for the very end. The King's gradual acceptance of the successful completion of the negotiations as necessary for continued French support of the Dutch was even more important, and it explains later Spanish eagerness to force the peace talks to collapse. Prospects of a diplomatic separation of France and the Republic, as well as the limited possibilities of a lukewarm Franco-Spanish alliance, must have been rather attractive to Spanish eyes. The great implication of Henry's agreement with Spain, however, was the King's acceptance of the fact that the Dutch-Spanish war should be terminated.

³²"que la consideration des bons effets que la dicte alliance pourra produire a la Chrestienté ... luy en avoit faict parler plus ouvertement". Ibid., xliv (Peckius to the Archduke, 9 January 1608).

An independent Dutch Republic became the goal of French foreign policy, and when a final peace treaty appeared unattainable, Jeannin's diplomatic activities did not rest until a long armistice had been agreed upon. Thus, Henry's sense of compromise again carried the day. The Dutch recognized the King's contribution to their independence while France was left free to explore the possibilities that a limited Spanish alliance might provide.

Late in 1607 Henry informed Jeannin of his decision to seek a peace for the Dutch rather than to promote the continuation of the war, citing his just and well-founded distrust of the English King, as well as the many reasons Jeanin had supplied.³³ He did not cite suggestions made by Spanish diplomats, although the timing of Henry's decision was such that a correlation between the two should not be discounted.

The new royal directive resulted in some quick Franco-Dutch decisions. Oldenbarnevelt was aware of the dangers that Spanish diplomatic delays presented to the internal situation of the Dutch Republic and was eager to counteract them by some solid international agreements. The French alliance proposal had been accepted graciously,³⁴

³³ "je dois preferer la paix a la guerre, pour la just et bien fondée mefiance que je dois avoir du roi d'Anglettere, et pour plusieurs autres raisons que vous sont connues comme a nous". Negociations, XII, pp. 479-480 (Letter from Henry, 3 November 1607).

³⁴ See p. 110.

but no definite headway had been made in its realization, and both Jeannin and Oldenbarnevelt tried to arouse English interest in participation.

Traditional Dutch policy held that a growth of French influence in the Netherlands should be checked by the exploitation of Anglo-French rivalry, and English participation in the treaty was advantageous to Henry IV too, for it would prevent James I from signing a Spanish alliance. Both Oldenbarnevelt and Jeannin agreed that only a strong allied partnership could subdue Spanish and Dutch opposition to a negotiated settlement.

James I hesitated. Apparently he did not wish to surrender his strong position as an independent observer. Oldenbarnevelt did not wait any longer, and on 23 January 1608 a signed copy of the Franco-Dutch agreement was sent to Paris.³⁵ When the Spanish negotiators returned to the Hague a week later, on 1 February 1608, they found their opponents assured of all good offices of the French King. In case Spain had any intentions of violating the treaty-to-be, a French army would come to the support of the Dutch and deal effectively with the intruders.³⁶

Most of the countries that had been invited to send a delegation to the Hague had done so by the beginning of 1608. Jeannin and Russy had been in Holland since May

³⁵ "Traite de la Ligue defensive". See Negotiations, XIII, p. 148-157.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 153, Art. I.

and had seen the arrival of delegates from England, Denmark and various German principalities. To avoid a possible fragmentation of Dutch political thinking by the presence of this large number of "objective" assistants from abroad, the States-General had adopted an "Act of Unity". All Dutch delegates agreed not to compromise in matters of independence and in the demand for full national control of religious policies.³⁷ The unanimity in adopting the proposal forboded hard bargaining. It took foreign diplomats a little by surprise, and Henry voiced his disapproval of this latest example of Dutch high-handedness. "They have acted too brazenly and with too much self-confidence, believing themselves shored up by us in the matter of peace and supplied with means to start the war again".³⁸

The French King was worried. Had Oldenbarnevelt outmanoeuvred him again? Protestant ministers in the Republic organized a general day of prayer to request help from above against their own pernicious government. But preparations for negotiations moved ahead anyway. In the evening of February 1 Oldenbarnevelt informed the Spanish delegates that representatives of the States-General would

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 111-112 (Deliberations of the States-General on the article of sovereignty, 24 December 1607).

³⁸ "Ils eussent aussi traité plus hardiment et surement, se ressentant appuyés de nous en cas de paix et pourvus de moyens de recommencer la guerre". Ibid., p. 129 (Letter from Henry, 29 December 1607).

be on hand for an official welcome the next morning.³⁹

Spinola, Richardot, Mancicidor, Neyen, and Verreyken formed the main group of Spanish delegates. They were welcomed by Oldenbarnevelt and one representative from each of the United Provinces, after which they turned their attention to the actual negotiations. The topic of religion was avoided and the discussions proceeded carefully. On 13 February brought the first serious difference of opinion when the subject of trade was tackled. The Spaniards proposed that the Dutch be free to trade everywhere except in the East and West Indies. In those areas they would fall under the same restrictions that applied to all non-Iberian shipping. Oldenbarnevelt retorted that this was hardly tenable since the Republic had forty-two ships and five to six thousand men in the East at that particular time. The talks stagnated as "one group wants everything, the other refuses everything".⁴⁰ Oldenbarnevelt suggested three possible solutions to break the diplomatic impasse: the peace treaty would include freedom of navigation, no peace treaty but an armistice with a status quo in the matter, or everyone would continue to trade and accept the necessary risks. He left the choice to the Spanish negotiators.

³⁹ Van Deventer, III, p. 169 (Notations by Oldenbarnevelt, 2 February 1608).

⁴⁰ "l'un veut tout, l'autre refuse tout".
Negociations, XIII, p. 257 (Jeannin to Villeroy, 17 March 1608).

Thus the Dutch would continue to intrude on the Spanish "monopoly" in the Indies; they were perfectly willing to prolong the war at sea despite an official peace on land. At no point did they consider a withdrawal from the Indies to obtain a peace with Spain.

In April of 1608 Father Neyen was sent to Spain for further instructions, but before his departure Neyen had been assured of Dutch agreement to a fourth solution: free trade for a nine year period while new negotiations for a possible extension were to commence after seven years. According to Jeannin the latest proposal was "in effect having it forever".⁴¹

Henry began to fear that the trade deadlock would result in a complete breakdown of negotiations and began to promote the idea of a truce rather than a full peace between the belligerents. "Also the King would agree to ... an armistice of this fashion rather than to start the war again".⁴² Jeannin tried to convince the Dutch that the new proposal was made to help the Republic, "that their [the French] proposal benefits us [the Dutch] and has not been

⁴¹"c'est autant en effet que l'avoir pour toujours". Ibid., p. 374 (Jeannin to La Broderie, 6 April 1608).

⁴²Le Roi approuvera aussi ... la trêve de cette façon que de rentrer en guerre". Ibid.

made to please the enemy".⁴³ Oldenbarnevelt added that le president appeared to be furious, and though the remark was probably made very incidentally, it takes on more meaning in the light of Henry's predicament. The King had negotiated simultaneously with the two parties and needed time to disengage himself from this entanglement. Peckius wrote to Brussels that "it appears to his [Henry's] ministers that the best expedient would be to sign a long truce with the States, to conclude the mentioned marriage and to await the time of its consumation and the offspring which could be produced".⁴⁴ Apparently, some preliminary decisions had been made for a succession of children the marital union might produce in some or all areas of the Netherlands. Henry had told Aerssens that "if the truce only lasts seven years, my son will be old enough to complete the suggested marriage, and it would be necessary to make [the conditions] effective and grant me the offers which they now make".⁴⁵

⁴³"dat hunne propositie ons, en nyet den vyant ten beste is gedaen". Van Deventer, III, p. 224 (Notations by Oldenbarnevelt, 27 August 1608).

⁴⁴"il semble à ses ministres que le plus expedient serait de faire une longue trêve avec les Etats, et cependant arrester le dit mariage et attendre le temps de consommation d'icelluy et de la lignée qui en pourra proceder". Ibid., p. 251 (Peckius to the Archduke, 18 August 1608).

⁴⁵"Si la Trêve ne dure que sept ans, mon fils sera en age pour accomplir le mariage proposé et aura-t-on besoin de l'effectuer en me cedant les offres, qu'on propose maintenant". Ibid., p. 261 (Aerssens to Oldenbarnevelt, 25 September 1608).

Aerssens also managed to extract some vital information from the King in respect of the duration of Dutch independence. He asked Henry if France would continue its military alliance with the Republic after the armistice had lapsed. The King remained noncommittal, observing "there is time enough, nevertheless, to give ample thought to the matter".⁴⁶ Meanwhile Villeroy had ordered Jeannin to keep the wording of the draft agreement for an armistice very vague so that at the "expiration of the truce everyone could take what he wanted".⁴⁷ Henry did not wish to clarify this statement. "I cannot satisfy you in respect to the declaration which you want. My ministers will give you good advice...."⁴⁸ Another of the King's statements takes on more meaning in the light of Henry's ambitions to extend French influence into the Lowlands by means of a Spanish marriage. According to the King "the Dutch were free, not sovereign, as liberty meant a term between servitude and sovereignty".⁴⁹ The remark was made

⁴⁶"toutefois il y a du temps pour y penser plus amplement et à loisir". Ibid.

⁴⁷"pour à l'expiration de la Trêve la faire prendre à un chacun comme l'on voudra". Ibid., p. 274 (Aerssens to Oldenbarnevelt, 31 December 1608).

⁴⁸"ne me puis je contenter de la declaration que vous demandez. Mes ministres vous donneront bon conseil". Ibid., p. 265 (Aerssens to Oldenbarnevelt, 25 September 1608).

⁴⁹Motley, I, p. 33 (Aerssens to Oldenbarnevelt, 14 January 1609).

after the Dutch had agreed to the draft proposals for a truce and is indicative of some unfulfilled aspirations that had not been given up at the time.

Neyen's lengthy absence from the Hague began to raise doubts in the Republic. The ever existing fears of Spanish deceit became stronger and soon were increased by new rumors from France. A special delegate of Philip III, Pedro de Toledo, was to be sent to the court of the French King, and since his presence would not escape the Dutch, it was deemed better to inform them beforehand. Villeroy instructed Jeannin to take care of it. "It is only necessary that he [Oldenbarnevelt] knows, and likewise those in high positions, that the arrival of this person [Pedro de Toledo] will not have any effects to the detriment of the friends and allies of this crown, so that they will not be offended nor alarmed".⁵⁰

A week before, on 17 May, the Dutch had agreed to extend the temporary armistice. Oldenbarnevelt and the majority of the Provinces had favored an extension till the end of the year, but heavy opposition by Maurice and the Province of Zealand had forced a reduction of the

⁵⁰"Mais il faut seulement qu'il sache, et pareillement ceux qui en sont dignés, que la venue de ce personnage n'opera rien au préjudice des amis et allies de cette couronne, afin qu'ils n'en prennent ombrage ni alarme". Negociations, XIV, p. 31 (Villeroy to Jeannin, 26 May 1608).

deadline to 1 August 1608.⁵¹ Jeannin had supported the Stadholder in this respect, and one could conclude from it that at the time the French ambassador was unaware of the slight turn in Henry's policy. The letter that brought the news of Toledo's pending journey to France also urged Jeannin "to continue the promotion of the mentioned peace, and in case it fails, of the long armistice upon which you have embarked".⁵² He was instructed "to disapprove any overture to weaken the party of the mentioned peace which will be made to you by Prince Maurice".⁵³

Henry's increasingly greater emphasis on the successful completion of the Spanish-Dutch negotiations was paralleled by a growing desire in Spanish government circles to force the discussions to collapse and to resume the war. Villeroy had ascertained that Philip III regretted even the temporary recognition of the Dutch for the duration of the talks. "They regret to have let out the word sovereignty, they honestly do not know how to withdraw it, and what they ponder is to hold on to the

⁵¹Van Deventer, III, p. 209 (Notations by Oldenbarnevelt, 17 May 1608).

⁵²"que vous continuez à favoriser ladite paix, et, au défaut d'icelle la longue trêve comme vous avez commencé". Negociations, XIV, p. 28 (Villeroy to Jeannin, 26 May 1608).

⁵³"n'approuvant aucunement l'ouverture qui vous a été faite par M. le prince Maurice pour affoiblir les partisans de ladite paix". Ibid., p. 29.

issue of the mentioned religion, and under this pretext to withdraw the former and to free themselves".⁵⁴

In a second letter of June 8, Jeannin was asked to return to France as Henry wanted him present for Pedro de Toledo's arrival. Villeroy also mentioned that Neyen's delay was not caused by any illness but that his departure from Spain had been postponed to await the outcome of Toledo's mission.⁵⁵ As it turned out, however, Jeannin never met the Spaniard. When the latter arrived in France, August 9, le president was on his way back to the Hague.

Henry promised Toledo to do his utmost in the matter of peace with the Republic but insisted that negotiations were to be continued on the bases on which they had commenced. The letter did not report a definite French commitment to any Spanish marriage proposals and although Jeannin argued to the Dutch "who were suspicious [and] everyone watched to see what answer we would give",⁵⁶ that marriages among royal houses were quite common, he

⁵⁴"Ils se repentent d'avoir laché le mot de la souveraineté, ils ne savent honnêtement s'en dedire, de facon qu'ils ont deliberé de s'attacher au point de ladite religion, et sous ce pretext renverser l'autre et s'en liberer". Ibid., pp. 49-50 (Villeroy to Jeannin, 8 June 1608).

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 78 (Villeroy to Jeannin, 10 August 1608).

⁵⁶"ils etoient en soupçon, chacun nous regardant pour voir quelle response nous y ferious". Ibid., p. 79 (Jeannin to Henry, 16 June 1608).

could assure them "that Your Majesty would not conclude a single alliance or friendship treaty, with any prince, that would be detrimental to their State, and contrary to the assistance and friendship he [Henry] had always shown and promised them; they were very satisfied by this and stood up with hat in hand to thank us".⁵⁷

Although Jeannin's reassurances had been accepted graciously by the Dutch, the latter intensified their activities to obtain English participation in the Franco-Dutch alliance. Their efforts were successful, and while Jeannin was on his way to France, James I committed his country to the military partnership.⁵⁸ Once again it had become clear that England favored a Franco-Spanish stalemate on the Continent but was willing to accept Spanish wrath if a northward expansion of French influence had to be contained.

The French had not overlooked the possibility of an English reaction to a Franco-Spanish agreement. As early as April Villeroy had urged Jeannin to travel to France by sea rather than give evidence to English sus-

⁵⁷"que votre Majeste ne feroit aucun traité d'alliance et amitié, avec quelqu'un prince que ce soit, qui fut prejudiciable à leur Etat et contrairie à l'assistance et amitié qu'il leur a toujours temoignée et promise; dont ils furent fort contents, et se levèrent de leur places mettant le chapeau en la main pour nous en remercier". Ibid.

⁵⁸Van Deventer, III, p. 217 (Notations by Oldenbarnevelt, 14 June 1608).

pitions by a journey via Brussels.⁵⁹ Similar reasons caused casual meetings between Jeannin and Richardot while walking in the forest.⁶⁰ However, the English had not been deceived, and their participation in the now triple alliance added a further dimension to the diplomatic network that Henry had in mind.

The end of July drew nearer, and neither Father Neyen nor Jeannin had returned to the Hague. The Dutch decided to give a further extension to the temporary truce and to await the arrival of Henry's delegate before resuming hostilities. On 14 August Jeannin arrived with the latest instructions of the French King. Henry declared himself quite willing to contribute to the well-being of the Republic but expected the Dutch to be lenient in matters of trade and religion. His proposal of assistance could be made without passing on any knowledge of it to the English.⁶¹

The Dutch respectfully acknowledged Jeannin's information since they "were strongly allied to the French King and had great regard for his experience and advice, as well as for his great assistance and good offices: but ...we [the Dutch] know the position of our State and where

⁵⁹Negotiations, XIV, p. 391 (Jeannin to Henry, 23 April 1608).

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 61 (Jeannin to Villeroy, 14 June 1608).

⁶¹Ibid., XI., pp. 495-500 (Second Instructions to Jeannin and Russy, 16 August 1608).

we could compromise best. We were also allies of the English King".⁶² Thus, Spanish-Dutch negotiations were left deadlocked and the meeting broke up "with angry faces".⁶³ The English backed the Dutch in the religious issue but revealed less willingness in the matter of trade. Neither Dutch nor Spaniards were willing to compromise, and a total collapse was near. Jeannin embarked on a last effort. He held private sessions with English, Dutch, Spanish and German diplomats. In spite of Richardot's admission that his side was bound by "clear instructions from the King of Spain in all these matters",⁶⁴ the Frenchman advised the Dutch to call the Spanish representatives to a full meeting of the States-General and to ask them "if they have anything to suggest".⁶⁵ In case the talks should break down, he thought it better if a final decision were made by Spain.

Richardot accepted the invitation, however, apparently hoping to shift responsibility for the final decision to the Dutch. On 20 August the Spanish delegation

⁶²Van Deventer, III, p. 221 (Notations by Oldenbarnevelt, 22 August 1608).

⁶³"mit quade contenance". Ibid., p. 222 (25 August 1608).

⁶⁴"pleinement instruits de la volonté du roi d'Espagne sur toutes choses". Negociations, XIV, p. 86 (Jeannin to Henry, 24 August 1608).

⁶⁵"S'ils avoient quelque chose à proposer". Ibid., p. 89.

informed the States-General that "the Catholic King agreed to what they [the negotiators] had consented and granted in regard to sovereignty" but that he insisted upon their acceptance of two conditions: "[to allow] the free and public exercise of religion throughout their State and to refrain from voyages to the Indies". Dutch response was a "noise of discontent in their general assembly". The audience agreed that "it was their [the Spaniards'] intention to break off all negotiations" and the final evidence of an opinion that "the Spaniards had never wanted to negotiate seriously".⁶⁶

Jeannin and Winwood joined the discussions, and although their views of the religious question still differed, they made a joint argument that the East Indies trade involved merely the interests of some private persons and should be subjected to the well-being of the Republic as a whole.⁶⁷ Thus, a Dutch withdrawal from the East was desired by all parties except the Dutch; French and English merchants undoubtedly would have taken advantage of any

⁶⁶"Le Roi catholique ne vouloit agréer ce qu'ils avoient consenti et accordé pour la souveraineté".

"l'exercice libre et public de al religion par tout leur Etat, et s'abstiennent aussi des voyages des Indes".

"murmure et le mecontentement en leur assemblée général".

"ce c'etoit leur intention de rompre tout traité".
Ibid., p. 90.

⁶⁷For Jeannin's complete address to the States-General, see Negociations, XIV, pp. 105-108.

mercantile opportunity in the East. A week later all foreign delegates appeared in a meeting of the States-General, and on behalf of them Jeannin proposed a joint effort to work for a long armistice now the possibility for peace no longer existed. He understood the position of the Republic and did not request the Dutch to compromise on the two crucial issues. The United Provinces should, for the duration of the truce, be regarded as a free nation "to whom the King of Spain and the Archdukes do not have any pretensions so that for the duration of the truce you will have freedom of trade in the Indies as well as with Spain and the Southern Netherlands, and this everywhere under your control; and you also will retain everything you possess at the present, and you will be granted other conditions which you in all good reason can request".⁶⁸

Although the Dutch did not reveal any great enthusiasm, they did not reject Jeannin's suggestion. The Spaniards were unmoved, however, and on 30 September 1608 they left Holland without having concluded any agreements. In their vacated premises they left a draft copy of a preliminary proposal for an armistice which was dated 16

⁶⁸"sur lequel le roi d'Espagne et les Archiducs ne pretendent rien; que, durant le temps d'icelle trêve, vous ayez le commerce libre, tant aux Indes qu'en Espagne et Pays-Bas, et par tout ce qui est de leur obeissance; que vous reteniez aussi tout ce que vous possédez à present, et qu'on y ajoute les autres conditions qu'on peut raisonnablement demander". Ibid., p. 106.

January 1608.⁶⁹ Since such an error hardly can be accepted as an oversight, an explanation should be sought in Richardot's game of calling the Dutch bluff. Republican leaders read the document and had it forwarded to Brussels. Thus, diplomatic contact had not been broken completely, and to fan the little flame of hope the foreign ambassadors moved to Brussels. Maurice opposed any further contact with the enemy and had a sharp exchange of ideas on the matter with Jeannin.⁷⁰

The day Jeannin addressed the assembly of the Dutch States-General, 27 August 1608, marked the turning point in the drawn out process of negotiations between the Spaniards and their Republican counterparts. From that moment on the French ambassador took control of diplomatic developments. He convinced the Dutch to accept the concept of a temporary recognition of their independence by Spain and thus to save Philip's pride. He took part in the internal conflict of the Republic and fought the opposition to any settlement with Spain. He read his King's letter to the leader of this opposition, Maurice, in the meeting of the States-General on 31 October.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 227 (Jeannin to Villeroy, 2 October 1608).

⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 190-191 (Jeannin to Villeroy 20 September 1608).

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 363 (Villeroy to Jeannin, 4 November 1608).

When Oldenbarnevelt had agreed to Jeannin's proposals, 19 October,⁷² Jeannin and his English colleague Winwood forced the same assembly to give its approval, informing the delegates that all foreign support for a continued war would be withdrawn if they did not accept.⁷³

Richardot's personal acceptance of the 27 August proposals occurred on 19 October, which was brought about by Jeannin's plea of desperation.⁷⁴ The personal commitment was used again to force another extension of the temporary armistice from the Dutch. Mid-February was the new deadline.⁷⁵ Then Philip III was pressured by the prospect that a definite and absolutely final collapse would take place if royal approval had not been given by that time. On 29 January Philip agreed to the basic principles

⁷²Van Deventer, III, p. 235 (Notations by Oldenbarnevelt).

⁷³"vous ne devez attendre aucun secours d'eux, pource que le refus que vous aurez fait d'accepter des conditions si sûres, honorables et avantageuses pour votre Etat, rendront votre guerre injuste, et eux ne veulent rien faire que soit sujet à blame". Negociations, XIV, p. 397 (Proposals to the States-General, 18 November 1608). The whole text of the address is printed on pp. 394-402.

⁷⁴Ibid., pp. 282-283 (Richardot to the Ambassadors, October 1608).

⁷⁵Ibid., XV, p. 28 (Jeannin to Richardot, 21 December 1608).

of Jeannin's draft proposals,⁷⁶ and, except for minor skirmishes, the road to success was clear.

As soon as correspondence between Jeannin and Oldenbarnevelt warranted the move, a regular Dutch delegation travelled to Bergen op Zoom in an effort to speed up the interaction.⁷⁷ Fourteen days later, 24 March 1609, Spanish and Dutch negotiators met in Antwerp, and on 9 April a twelve years truce was agreed upon.

On 18 May, Jeannin made his last address to the Dutch States-General. On behalf of the French and English kings the ambassador congratulated the Dutch for all the efforts they had made to the great advantage of their Republic. He urged unity and co-operation among the provinces and expressed the hope of serving them again on behalf of his King.⁷⁸ A month later he left for France. The letter of gratitude sent to Henry IV by the secretary of the States-General contained this passage:

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 180 (Jeannin to Sully, 1 February 1609).

⁷⁷Van Deventer, III, p. 239 (Notations by Oldenbarnevelt, 4 March 1609).

⁷⁸Negotiations, XV, pp. 426-432 (Jeannin's last address to the States-General, 18 May 1609).

We have deemed it our duty humbly to thank your Majesty for his pleasure to have sent us a person who has given us much evidence of his great experience, judgement, wisdom and leadership in important matters and who by exceptional magnanimity and skill has overcome all kinds of difficulties that presented themselves.⁷⁹

The realization of the Twelve Years' truce greatly enhanced the prestige of the French King in Europe. Without the latter's personal influence and the admirable skills and perseverance of Pierre Jeannin, this feat would not have been possible. Its success, however, also implied the end of any aspirations Henry had to attain some immediate gains in the Spanish Netherlands by means of force; what was left for the moment was a careful exploitation of a dynastic alliance with Spain without the loss of Dutch friendship. James I could take pride in having prevented a possible French expansion, but there had been no positive gains for England. The great loser in the settlement had been Spain, for no thinking individual could expect the Dutch to submit to Spanish authority after twelve years of complete independence. William of Orange's dream of a united state in the Netherlands had been destroyed. The Spanish hold on the south had been too strong, the

⁷⁹"Nous avons jugé être de notre devoir de remercier bien humblement votre Majesté que son bon plaisir a été d'envoyer de par deçà un tel personnage qui nous laisse beaucoup de témoignages de sa tres grande experience, jugement, prudence et bonne conduite en grandes affaires, et qui, par magnanimité et singuliere dexterité, a surmonté toutes de difficultés qui se sont offertes". *Ibid.*, pp. 496-497 (Cornelius Aerssens on behalf of the States-General to Henry, 22 June 1609).

reliance on foreign benevolence and aid too risky. When the Republic was offered all it asked for, Oldenbarnevelt had sacrificed old dreams. In spite of great internal opposition, he had piloted "the ship of the Republic to the open waters, where it could be free in its movements and relatively safe.⁸⁰ Despite rifts and tensions, generally consistent co-operation between the Republic and France had been a major factor in this success.

⁸⁰"het schip der Republic naar de open zee, waar zij vrij in haar bewegingen en betrekkelijk veilig is": Blok, Muller, Muller, eds., Robert Fruin's Verspreide Geschriften, VII, p. 468.

CONCLUSION

THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW POWER

Franco-Dutch diplomatic relations of the late sixteenth century developed from an abyss of confusion during the 1580's into a viable military partnership in the mid-1590's. The political division of France into two hostile military and religious camps, which had followed the assassination of Henry de Guise in 1584, became even sharper after the violent death of King Henry III in 1589. The new claimant of the throne, Henry IV of Bourbon, needed all the support he could obtain to secure the crown and was, thus, willing to accept the Dutch as equal partners in the Triple Alliance of 1596 in order to strengthen his hold on France.

The 1580's also had been a very traumatic experience for the Dutch. The beginning of the decade had seen a disappointing performance by the Duke of Anjou and had decreased the desire for a foreign dynasty in the Netherlands. However, the assassination of William of Orange in 1584 and the desperate military situation of the Spanish war, had made them once again turn to France and England for a commitment of royal protection in return for sovereignty over the rebellious provinces. The growing internal disorders in France eliminated any serious thought of a French venture in the Netherlands while the steadily worsening Anglo-Spanish relationship could not bear the additional strain of another conflict between the two countries. Thus, the unstable political climate

of northern Europe during this period, forced the Dutch to develop their own functional system of government.¹ When, in 1588, the Spanish Armada brought about the complete rupture of friendly relations with England, the Dutch revolt became a matter of national interest to Elizabeth, and considerable English aid began to flow to Holland. This extra financial support combined with Parma's diversion to France alleviated the pressure on the Dutch frontiers and provided a breathing space for some internal reorganization. Gradually a growing national consciousness developed which was strengthened by repeated requests by Henry and Elizabeth for Dutch army and naval support. By the mid-1590's the Republic had become firmly established. Its military strength and the need of Henry IV forced a reluctant Elizabeth to grant national recognition to the Dutch.

Henry's simultaneous war against Spain and Spanish supported insurgents at home proved to be disastrous for his country. He realized that only a period of peace and national prosperity could help him overcome widespread religious and political opposition in France. In 1598 Henry withdrew from the anti-Spanish alliance and signed a peace with Philip II at Vervins. Although his withdrawal from the war provided France with some immediate relief,

¹J. De Bosch Kemper, De Staatkundige Geschiedenis van Nederland (Amsterdam: Johannes Muller, 1868) pp. 100-115.

the King could not afford to abandon the Republic. He had to buy the friendship of the Dutch not only as a means to counteract a possible Anglo-Dutch coalition but also for obvious reasons of keeping the Habsburgs involved in the Dutch war. Thus, Henry embarked on a carefully balanced program of aid to the Dutch. He provided them with money, he allowed French regiments to serve in the Dutch army and he showed himself very understanding of Dutch offences against Spanish interests in his realm.

Henry's policy of matching French support of the Dutch war with the actual needs of the Republic appeared to be successful. The level of assistance was always too great to allow for a Spanish victory but was also constantly too small to make a Spanish defeat a realistic possibility. Thus, the King hoped to achieve a military stalemate in the Netherlands and to exploit the subsequent war fatigue to the benefit of France. In July 1600 immediately following the battle of Nieuwpoort, a Dutch victory appeared to be imminent and Henry spoke about re-entering the war against Spain. When the Dutch did not follow up their victory Henry's interest faded again. After the death of Elizabeth I England withdrew from the war, and Henry's plans became almost a reality. Twice Aerssens was sent to the Hague to ascertain the level of Dutch willingness to recognize the French King in return for decisive military support. The government of the Republic promised to recognize Henry's military leader-

ship in the war on condition that France assumed half the burden of it but did not commit itself in the issue of sovereignty.

Perhaps the French King had underestimated the Dutch desire for independence; perhaps he had made his move too early. The Republic informed the English, who informed the Spaniards, of the latest French proposals. Thereafter growing Spanish fear of a new Franco-Dutch alliance, in spite of Henry's denials that such agreements were contemplated, set the stage for some serious preliminary negotiations. The announcement that a basic understanding between Spain and the Republic had been agreed upon took Europe by surprise and made Henry's scheme collapse. To safeguard French interests in the Netherlands and to promote the continuation of the war was the delicate mission of the talented Pierre Jeannin.

Spain continued to postpone serious negotiations with the Dutch and hoped to reach a diplomatic understanding with Henry IV, which would leave the Republic isolated. The French King did not reject a Spanish proposal to replace the childless Archdukes in the Netherlands by a French prince married to a Spanish princess, even though a condition of the proposal was that he cease military aid to the Dutch whether peace was achieved or not. Thus, Henry became committed to the final success of Spanish Dutch negotiations since a continuation of the war without

French aid would risk a dangerous Spanish victory. The King informed Jeannin of the change in French policy and the ambassador was faced immediately with deliberate Spanish attempts to force the negotiations to collapse. When a final peace appeared to be impossible, Jeannin forced a twelve years' truce on both parties and saved his King a serious diplomatic embarrassment.

The year 1609 brought international recognition of Dutch independence. It had been achieved with the indispensable support of the French King, although the actual occurrence had not been Henry's aim at the outset. Whatever the intentions of the King towards the Dutch may have been, they were disturbed forever by the assassination of Henry IV in May 1610. The new regency avoided complex foreign involvements and left the Dutch free to decide their own international policy.

The grinding war against Spain had come to a halt. The death of the childless Duke of Cleves-Julich, however, made an immediate resumption of it likely. Again the Habsburg and anti-Habsburg forces came face to face, but the king's untimely death ended all hopes of a French offensive. In September 1610 a Dutch army conquered Julich and established the temporary rule of two serious contenders for the heritage: the Elector of Brandenburg and Count Neuburg. For the next three years no serious attempts were made to oppose the claims of the two prot-

estantsprinces. In 1613 Neuburg converted to catholicism and married a princess of Bavaria. Thus, the religious question brought the conflict to the brink of war. Maurice of Nassau again occupied Julich while a strong Spanish force under Spinola settled in Wesel. Both Spinola and Oldenbarnevelt remembered the difficulties of terminating a war and were willing to compromise. The treaty of Xanten, 1614, agreed to the status quo: Cleves-Julich remained divided and the danger of war abated. Thus, the Dutch had forced the Habsburgs to a draw. The display of international leadership by the young Republic clearly showed that the "temporary" independence envisaged by the agreement of 1609 constituted an unrealistic appraisal of an ipso facto situation and that the power vacuum created in northern Europe by Henry IV's death was likely to be filled by the Dutch Netherlands.

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